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Hello again,

Here we are with our final newsletter for 1986. I'm more pleased than usual with this particularly issue, simply because it has more content supplied by the members than any other than I can remember.

But before I go into that, I do have some news which may be of minor interest to those of you who live in Melbourne. To my great surprise, I have become a radio announcer. Well, sort of. Since the beginning of November, I have been presenting a three-hour nostalgia programme over 3DB, every Sunday evening from 6.00 - 9.00 pm. The programme covers the period from the late 1930's to the early 1950's and features anything and everything of interest - music, comedy, radio, movies, etc. The programme was the idea of Bert Newton who, despite my protests that I am in no way a trained announcer, thought that I might be able to handle it. Anyway, you can block your ears when I'm on and just concentrate on the entertainment which is pretty good.

Enough of that. As I said at the start, this issue has a very high content supplied by the membership. And let's run down a few of the highlights.

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THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY
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Vern Taylor's long-awaited new series 'Transcribing Bing' has finally eventuated, and it was well worth the wait. Vern went to great pains top research and write this series and I believe that it is the best that he has done to date. We'll be running it over this and the following two issues. You can read Part 1 from page 4 onwards.

Ian Barnes vistited the U.K. last year and stumbled across an unusual tribute to Bing in Bournmouth. You can read about this on page 23.

From pages 27 - 33 we have a first for this newsletter. Member Ted Paradissis has written an engaging fantasy about Bing entitled 'Writer's Block'. I'm sure that you'll enjoy this as much as I did.

Our 'New Releases' section has been expanded into a major feature for this issue, thanks to the release of a very interesting LP on the local scene. The disc is a product of Rober Parker, the man responsible for the records released under the title of "Jazz Classics in Digital Stereo". Mr Parker has supplied us with a complete feature on his records and how and why the series came about. See page 41 onwards. By the way, thanks to all those members who wrote to tell me about Mr Parker's Crosby release.

A lady named Diana McKie, a friend of member Clem Parkinson, has compiled several crossword puzzles featuring Bing and his career. "CROSS(BY) WORD No 1" features on page 49.

And Ashley Cooper from Tasmania has supplied us with an interesting record label for 'Collectors Corner on page 53.

Elsewhere in the magazine, you'll find plenty of other things to interest you too.

On pages 21 and 22, you can read the President's Report and Treasurer's Report from our October AGM,

From the centre pages onwards, we have a reprint of an article on Bing and Bob from the British TV Times of July 1962.

Whilst in Singapore recently, member Dave Rapp found that nostalgia is alive and well and the proof is on page 55.

And on page 56, we have one of the most bizarre newspaper articles I've ever read on Bing, from the U.K.

Finally, 'From Out Of The Past' this issue features extracts from Sam Coslow's autobiography 'Cocktails For Two', loaned Gordon Philips. Happy reading!

MONDAY DECEMBER 8TH - LAST FUNCTION OF THE YEAR

And we're screening one of the most famous Crosby movies of them all:

HOLIDAY INN

supported by a few short films of interest.

Venue, for those who haven't been there before, is the theatrette of the AMP Building, corner Bourke and William Streets, City.

Please try to arrive around 7.00 so we can get underway at 7.30 sharp. Just lately, some of our nights have been finishing a little late - a cause of great embarrassment to all.

Entry: Members $4, Member-families $6, Pensioners & Students $2 and non-members $5.

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MONDAY FEBRUARY 23RD 1987 - FIRST FUNCTION OF THE NEW YEAR

Yep, another film evening. And to get 1987 off to a good start, we've scheduled Bing's late 30's feature:

EAST SIDE OF HEAVEN

Once again, there will be a supporting feature, but the title will be announced at a later date.

Same details as above apply re venue and entry charges.

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ALL THE FILM EVENING DATES FOR 1987

Note these days now: APRIL 27TH, JUNE 22ND, AUGUST 10TH, OCTOBER 12TH & DECEMBER 7TH.

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PAST FUNCTIONS: Our joint evening with the Al Jolson society on August 25th was a great success with over 100 people attending, while our AGM on October 27th drew over 80. And that's enough for Past Functions. Who wants to live in the past, anyway!

TRANSCRIBING BING

by VERN WESLEY TAYLOR

I

"THOSE WERE PRETTY EXCITING DAYS FOR US. NOBODY REALLY KNEW WHAT THE HELL WE WERE DOING. WE WERE ALL INVOLVED IN A NEW THING IN BROADCASTING, AND IT WAS FUN TO BE OUT THERE, PROVING IT."

(Murdo MacKenzie)

In the days when it mattered most, the word 'transcription', with reference to programmed radio entertainment, had no legitimacy, but since a 'dressy' term for the new development was needed, one was borrowed from music and literature. It was not until relatively recent times that this new connotation was taken seriously by the English language dictionaries, yet today it is the only meaning of the word for most of us.

By the summer of 1947, several years after it had become part of 'announcer usage', Bing Crosby, with a tiny group of other radio people, was about to spread the new definition across the United States. "These vibrant arts", the Poet assured us, "conveyed by magical vapours unknown, do wonders and joy to our ear."

It took about a year, longer if you are one of those who believe Crosby struggled long and hard to persuade the various Powers within the industry to allow him to have his very popular series recorded rather than attempting to continue in the traditional 'live' method of broadcast, which had become terrifically onerous for him. Since transcriptions were already in use by the so-called 'regionals', and doing quite successfully, it seemed to Bing that going national was the next logical step. Since, as we have learned, he failed in his endeavours and, after a protracted off-the-air, on-the-air agitation which created heavy burdens for all concerned, his

'naughty-boy' tricks at last resulted in the dissolution of his contract with The Kraft Company, his sponsor. More than this, his actions ruptured relations with the program producers and the broadcasting network, the great National Broadcasting Company (NBC).

The legal battle over, the popular singer found willing replacement. The new sponsor was to be the Philco Radio Corporation, the new network, the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) while the producer would be his own 'Bing Crosby Enterprises', just recently formed. This new organization in Hollywood was headed by Crosby's older brother, Everett, a man who had the happy faculty of picking up quickly on the intricacies of industry politics in a fast-lane business. Furthermore, he was to be abetted by yet another Bing sibling, Larry, no slouch himself in the same area.

Bing was always fortunate in finding the right people for the job. Much of the implication behind his often-repeated remark that he was 'just lucky', stemmed from this innate awareness of who and what was good for his interests. Another fortuitous choice was his appointment of Mr Murdo Mackenzie as the Director and co-producer of the new 'package'.

The assignnment imposed heavy and altogether different burdens on the still-youthful shoulders of the former Sound Technician of the Kraft show. However, for weeks, not realizing he faced impossible tasks, MacKenzie had been lining things up. Lining Things Up was a precise title for the work he would always do while working with Bing.

The little production company really did not move away from their old quarters, NBC, and Murdo as an ex-employee could not expect to find it all easier than he might in new surroundings, especially since he would be wearing his new and far more impressive hat. The show was slotted for Thursday evening (6 PM) October 16, so there seemed to be enought time to get everything done. Although the studios had been an important part of the opposition which Crosby had had to fight, they were, nevertheless, the only place to go for 'canning' his program.

NBC was a block-long three-storey structure designed in the typical Art-Deco style of the time, built of concrete and painted in a thick pale green stucco. It stood along the north side of Sunset Boulevade between Vine and Morningside Court. Bing had been on hand for the opening day ceremonies in 1935 and, almost weekly since, had performed there. Now, although he was to do his 'crooning' over ABC, he would continue to work there. ABC, beginning as an offshoot of NBC, had never had their own studios andwhere else, even though it had gone through several ownerships. It was believed that the extensive equipment in the ex-parents's facilities was necessary for a broadcast series of such magnitude as the Bing Crosby show.

The switch to ABC was but a technicality after all, since broadcasting was, and is, nothing more than FCC allotted allocations on a Federally-controlled wave-length band, interceptable by radio receivers. However this was everything to the ABC stockholders as well as to the Bing Crosby Enterprises. What the listeners heard was ABC.

As he was to do for the rest of his radio career, MacKenzie handled all the details, big and little, for Bing's shows. All arrangements were worked out by the time the performers were on hand in Studio B, 'Bing's Studio'. ABC employees were the technicians, most of the artistes were paid by Bing Crosby Enterprises. Bob Jensen, today Chief Engineer for the prestigious Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters but then an audio technician working with the crew, remembers it as a moment of quiet tensions and expectancy, but a little confusion is normal in such activities. One large concern, at least, was gone, hopefully forever, thepressure associated with live broadcasting, that phenomena Robert Benchley called the 'horror of consistant accuracy'.

Crœsby was in the building, everybody knew, and would soon appear. For awhile he probably closeted himself with Bill Morrow and with John Scott Trotter and some of the musicians. Soon he would be on the stage, familiarizing himself with details, reading the script, noodling around with his songs. If it seemed simple to him, he must have been a minority of one. His job as host singer

and his financing made it all happen but he avoided interfering with those who were hired to do all the rest.

He had always been an easy-going person, so it was said, but on others, not himself. He was usually among the earliest on the scene. He was guided by the suggestions of those around him until he had his material down pat. Trotter on the music, Morrow on the script, MacKenzie on the production and anyone in and around these three lieutenants who could help him. In the broader sense, this entertainer-cum-businessman depended upon scores of others who depended on him.

Sometimes he was long on patience, sometimes short; he fought his moods like anybody else and, if he did not always win, he obviously tried harder than most. More often than not, he was 'gentle in his firmness', suffering fools with difficulty but forgiving honest mistakes. Another feature in his make-up was that he did not easily alter his habits and this consistency made it simpler for his fellow-workers, because they knew what they could expect from him. Those who were fortunate enough to work with Bing Crosby have attested to these facts over and over again. Mentioning them here is to quickly acquaint the reader with Bing and the other participants in the story, so that he may the more enjoy their adventure.

He opened his new series that night with his familiar theme-song then a brief patter with his announcer, Ken Carpenter, then sang I'VE GOT THE SUN IN THE MORNING, a 'safe' song because it was identified with him and had no difficult passages. The idea was to make this initial airing as secure as possible, since so much was riding on it. Skitch Henderson was the only important new addition to the 'talent', his lush piano work filling the spot formerly held by Eddy Duchin, who was now holding down the host chores over the 'new' Kraft Music Hall. Lina Romay's rendition, LOVE ON A GREYHOUND BUS, hardly suited either her vocal abilities or what the public had come to expect from her, a mystery to her to this day. "Can you imagine me singing such a number!", and it didn't make much sense for someone who had spent her entire career warbling Latin melodies.

8 When it was over, the Hooper Ratings gave it a sixteen, as high as any new show ever needed in order to make that all-important first impression. And so began the first transcribed 'coast-to-coast' radio program. It is perhaps little more than a curio today but at the time it was more than mere history. Everyone involved was pleased at how smoothly it seemed to go. There were handshakes and congratulations all around. The telephone calls began coming in early and someone jokingly suggested that two of them were from General David Sarnoff of NBC and Bill Paley of CBS.

Most of the crew left the studio early after the broadcast but Murdo was already busy with the next one, thinking about what had just been done. What he had heard nagged at him, not even the edits very much, rather it was more a matter of what he had not heard. Of course he had not expected the same sound quality that came with the live broadcast, but there seemed to be a dullness, a flatness that even Mutual's regional recorded stuff did not possess. Could it have been all that cutting and fitting, all those phases of re-recording?

"There were problems associated with those big (sixteen inch) discs," Murdo said. "You could never make them sound perfect, no matter what you tried to do. Besides,we were new at the whole thing, anyway." Dubbing from one turntable to the other required care and patience, an art not quickly or easily mastered.

More tangible troubles arose after the third show. The Philco people spoke to the Enterprises people, reminding them of a certain clause in their contract which stipulated that Bing would have to go back to live performances if his hooper rating fell below twelve points for four consecutive weeks. The first airing had attracted a lot of national interest and so generated a very high rating but during the weeks since, it had fallen to a scary 12.2. Others now joined Murdo in worrying. Worse than this, the doom-sayers and the I-Told-You-So types were beginning to emerge from the bushes.

As a game in audio-analysis, it is fun to check over that first broadcast for comparison with later ones. There are few apparent breaks which might suggest where edit was done. Not many would manage without at least some edits. Bob Hope in the guest

Bing is Back!

Yes, tonight at 10, the one and only Bing Crosby comes back to the air—for

PHILCO

with

Bob Hope

as his guest

Wednesday at 10 is "Philco Radio Time" starring

BING CROSBY

From now on Wednesday is the night to hear Bing sing . . . a new night, a new station, a new program. It's "Philco Radio Time," Bing's solo and only radio show, with Jonie Scott Trotter, his Chorus and Orchestra, The Charioteers, Lina Romay, Skitch Henderson and Bing himself with his songs and banter delivered by radiovox. So make it a habit, now, listen every Wednesday to "Philco Radio Time"

(Photo: Larry Kiner)

spot betrays one or two cuts in his delivery. Possibly he lost his place or stumbled over his words, and though there are three vocals left and a few more bits of business, no further breaks can be firmly detected; not bad so early in the game.
So the number one showwas behind them, closing with Carpenter intoning the production-credit: "produced and transcribed in Hollywood and directed by Bill Morrow and Murdo MacKenzie."
The wording was slightly re-arranged and simplied but was used for all 108 Philco broadcasts - except one. "They took my name off once," said Murdo, "and naturally, this bothered me, so I asked Bing, 'How come?' He didn't even know about it but he said he would fix it. Sure enough, he did and they didn't try again."

Writing a radio show was a task requiring a very special talent, closely akin to movie-writing or evenmore exalted literatry composition. The work demanded unlearnable, inborn skill; a predisposition toward conscious awareness of what people said and the way they said it and taking delight capturing it on paper. To some, Bill Morrow's work was not precisely the same warm pace that Carroll Carroll had managed to sustain throughout the long years of the Kraft show. Still, it was superior in some ways; it had a brisker flow and was every bit as funny and fast. Once again, Bing had been 'lucky' in his choice of a colleague. The two were good friends, fishing together, sharing a convivial drink together and possessing a similiar outlook on life.

Morrow was a well-known and well-respected comedy-writer. Among his credits was the Jack Benny show, one of the most popular series of all time, therefore it was indeed a coup for the Enterprises to obtain his services. Whatever the reason may have been that Carroll did not go along with the others to Philco, the witty personality of Mr Morrow was very welcome. Like Murdo and Carp, he was to remain to the end of the singer's radio days.

"He was, essentially, a very nice man," Mackenzie said. "He had a wonderful rapport with people. He shone brightly in his profession." More than that, "He was what they call a pressure-writer. It never bothered him too much to work right down to the wire. He may have actually worked better that way. For example,

(Photo: Larry Kiner)

one time on one of the shows we did in New York, Fred Allen was our guest. Now Fred, sometimes, could become the nervous sort, especially when he wasn't in control of what was going on. All during the transcribing of the show, with an audience and everything, Bill would send in a page or two of material they were reading. Allen was much too methodical to handle that very well. 'Where's Doc?! Where's the rest of the script?' I would rush over to the door and shout, 'Hey Bill! What's going on?' Then - at the very last moment - in he'd come with another page. 'Don't get so excited', he would say very quietly, 'I'll have it for them; they'll get it in plenty of time'."

Bing believed in his new script-writer with a rare intuition. "He really knew what he could expect from Bill," said Mackenzie, "and Bill, for his part never ever let Bing down. Crosby accepted him, so he trusted him. It was that simple. We all liked him but sometimes he could make you wonder a little." Murdoi offered an insight into their partnership: " I guess you could say that I was a good balancer for Bill Morrow. We knew each other pretty well from his Benny days and we got along beautifully. I respected his abilities and I liked him personally but we were somewhat different. He was unmarried then and got around a lot more than I did. I was a settled kind of guy, home every night to the wife and kids. We had different sets of values and opinions about some things, but it is my belief these little differences made our workingtogether so successful for so long. There was never any competition, no hustling one another, no upstaging. He had that comedic sense and he was artistic and imaginative, and he was a darn good script-assembler, when it came to dove-tailing his writer-assistant's stuff for the final working script. He had just a great sense of what went down - what played,"
But it was MacKenzie who gave the production of the program the tone it had, whether his innate modesty (so like Bing's) will allow him to admit it or not. His multifaced contributions underlay everything. He happened to possess a rock-solid faith in Crosby and what he could accomplish for the whole company if he had someone loyally watching out for him as he did within the Crosby Enterprises in the person of his two brothers.
It did not bother Murdo that he might, occasionally, be notably zealous, that is exactly what he wanted to be.

Harking back to his days as Mixer on the Kraft show, he provided a perfect illustration. "I'd pester Bing, sometimes, about trivial details or I could get all worked up over something that didn't really require that much steam. They seemed a little funny, looking back. Bing always figured me out pretty good and rode along with me with his good-natured attitude. Now and then, while he would be doing a solo, he would lean in a little too close to his microphone. He never let it bother him, like it did others; no trouble to him at all, he acted like it wasn't there. Then I would signal him from the booth to back off a little - right while he was singing - to pull back. I'd wave my arms at him, maybe grit my teeth, maybe even shake my fist in the air. He would kind of look at me, and when his singing was through, I'd rush out and say, 'You know something? That was awful! You went in too close again!' I could get very serious about it, though it embarasses me to admit it. 'Look Bing,' I would say, 'I'm only interested in making you sound like - well, like you really sound. When you get too close to that thing, you sound like you've got your head in a bucket, and I don't want any part of putting you on the air like that'. He'd look at me with a little bit of a smile on his face and say, 'Okay, okay! I'll try to watch it but, for goodness sakes, don't sock me!.'"

When the industry realized transcribed programming for the entire country had been accomplished at last, despite all that had been done to prevent it, it settled down to await the all-important Public Reaction. As it turned out, there was very little forth-coming from the so-called Man-In-The-Street, who was more likely, as Bing had said at the beginning, to give such mechanical changes very little of his attention. Then as now, he was much more concerned with program content. The psychological impact of what he was hearing being mere recording and now flowing directly from 'living voices', left him almost indifferent. Shows came and went as frequently as they do on television today, but because of what they have to offer in the way of entertainment. So it was the trade after all, with its hide-bound conventional ways of doing things that was impressed. A newspaper radio-columnist spoke for them all when he said, quoting Al Jolson in the world's first talking picture, "Folks, you ain't heard nothing

Morrow, left; Trotter, middle' Murdo, right - going over script and music cues, prior to performing with Bing.
(Photo: John T. Mullin)

yet." but the profit himself was unaware of just how much more there was to hear.

Murdo's preoccupation with correcting the phase-levels to better uniformity and the Hooper numbers dropping to near the cancellation point, spurred the Enterprises to search deep into the malaise of the four-week old philco Radio Time. Everett and Bing and the others suspected it was more than a technical problem. Could the trouble lie with the guest-stars? The first shows had offered no genuinely top-drawer personalities, with the

exception of Bob Hope and he was not quite yet the superstar he was to become. Most of them had been 'sectional', appealing only to well-defined tastes among the listeners; Ezio Pinza for the classic-lovers, Burl Ives for the hillbilly music lovers, Rafael Mendez for jazz-music lovers. The line-up was changed to include broader-based luminaries, such as Judy Garland and Jimmy Durante but that would not be able to appear for weeks, because contracts had already been signed for still other, lesser stars.

Perhaps it was the choice of songs? But they were as strong as anyone could expect them to be. Still, those for Lina Romay were jarring exceptions. She was given more appropriate material (SOUTH AMERICA TAKE IT AWAY) but this unfortunately was repeated too soon. Then she was assigned A MAN IS A BROTHER TO A MULE. She was dropped from the last production. Ironically, she was called back months later for a last opportunity and provided songs that made good sense for her image, SPANISH SONG and BRAZIL but it was too late. It was decided she was not suitable as the 'wholesome girl type' which, it was wanted by the silent yet ever-threatening listener. Actually, it was decades before it was discovered that the public enjoyed the same catholic tastes as showbiz folks.

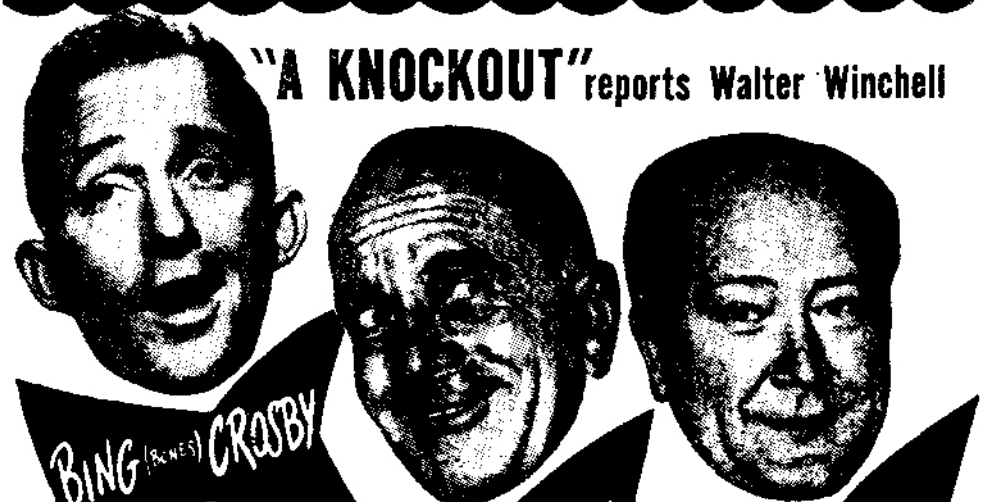
It was other, subtler, factors that had more to do with the saving of the show as a transcription. It skated along until the first of the year, then was moved from Thursdays to Wednesdays, and was eventually advertised in the press as 'Bingsday'. By now, too, the industry as well as the listening audience had grown accustomed to accepting the fact that the program was a transcription, so the Hooper went back up to sixteen, and remained in that pleasant region from then on. The guest drawing power also rose: Jolson, Georgie Jessell, Mickey Rooney, Groucho Marx...

Perhaps there was some justice in the nick-name Bing bestowed on Murdo, the Dour Scot, because he continued to stew; however he he had good reason to stew; the broadcast masters were still unsatisfactory. He asked Perry Botkin, the splendid guitarist who had worked with Bing since Eddie Lang's death, to approach the Musician's Union, in an effort to resolve the persisting wretched situation. Perry was both Trotter's band manager and the Union's steward in the company. MacKenzie

Old-Time Minstrel Show

Tonight on PHILCO RADIO TIME

"A KNOCKOUT" reports Walter Winchell



There hasn't been a show like this since radio was born

Imagine! 3 of America's greatest performers, together in a rollicking old-time minstrel show with all the flavor of the good old days. It will make your heart sing! Don't miss it!

Tonight

at 9 P. M.

ABC

3 great voices blended in America's favorite songs

In the Evening • Beautiful Dreamer
Oh! Susanna
Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight
Banks of the Wabash

(Photo: Larry Kiner)

believed the electrical transcription's serious flaw of 'drop-off' during the last third of their playing time, which was commmon to all phonograph records, could be avoided if they went from using two discs to three. If they could be pemitted the right to use three ten-minute one-sided records, that last five minutes would no longer get in the way. Finally, after much discussion, the Union was convinced that the musicians would not be cheated, that they would be paid for whatever work they did, and they gave Murdo special dispensation to break the old rule of fifteen minutes per recording. But, while this did indeed help, it did not solve all their problems.

"I think our biggest hang-up was the dubbing," Murdo said. "You see, when we cut a broadcast onto a disc-master, we always ended up with the inserts being generations old; it just couldn't be helped. Lets say we have the whole thing down on the three ten-minute originals and we're ready for editing. If we have a song by Bing that doesn't happen to be as good as the rehearsal version, we have to tear the show apart at that point and exchange the two 'takes'. Now, if some of the rest of it can likewise be improved, we go ahead and do that too. Maybe we have to cut out a mistake or two in the dialogue or the music. Usually we had to shorten or stretch the time to fit the slot. All these pieces had to be phased together and covered with music or a commercial or a station standby abbouncement. Some of the stuff would be only two generations old, but sometimes it could be as much as four. Let me tell you, it was murder to edit so they (the audience) wouldn't notice, and it all had to be done with turntables and 16 inch records. Stopping the turntables, backing them up, adjusting the volume levels..."

With the show recorded and edited and ready for broadcast, it had to be transferred to the broadcast-masters. This was done downstairs by the ABC engineers. Three sets of two 16-inch ET's were cut on soft acetates or (earlier) lacquor-coated aluminium discs. These were used at the Network's principal stations, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York. A fourth copy was cut for the phonograph-record maker, who produced his nickle-silver metal master from it and pressed the approximately 300 vinyl copies for the affiliates around the country. Said Murdo, "The network used the acetates because they were two generations younger than the pressings. There just wasn't

time enough each week to cut acetates for the local stations and deliver them in time."

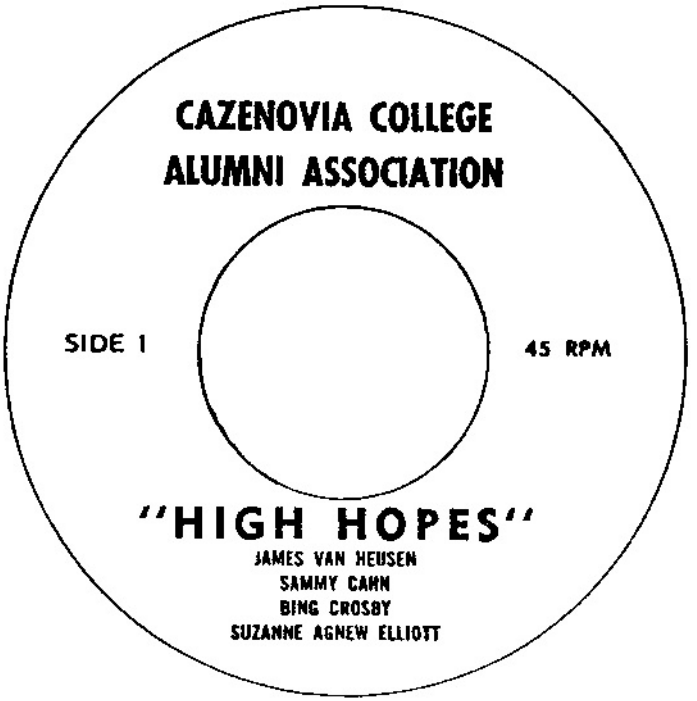
During this early period, MacKenzie, who had gone to Bing whenever he needed him, by-passing the usual chain-of-command, turned to him once more. "Decca had the first contract from us to produce the pressings for the affiliates but I did not like the quality. To be honest, they were junk. They never made a decent record back then. Even my wife, Jinny (Trudy Erwin), who made Deccas with Bing will tell you how terrible they were. So I went to Bing about it, and it wasn't long before we had a new outfit doing them for us."

All of which means that the taped versions of the shows existing today are dubs four to five generation old...if they have been taken directly from the pressings.

ABC, despite its own grave concerns, contributed in no small way to the continuing complaints. In an effort to save money, they insisted on shipping pressings to their contract outlets rather than use the costlier telephone transmission lines. This meant that roughly sixty-five percent of the listeners were getting their Bing through a veritable haze. It was, therefore, unreasonable to expect anyone, in or out of the business, to grow accustomed to it, especially since every other major radio program - on CBS and NBC - came out loud and clear.

MacKenzie knew that better ways would be found for recording Bing because the transcribing of radio was not going to go away, but he had a very personal stake in the show. It just had to be a success. He could not be certain what would happen to him if Crosby was forced to go back to the live broadcast. Murdo had long-since decided he would never return to the mixer-board, but he had no control over his position with the Bing Crosby Enterprises. So he continued to struggle with the 'opposition' while it only grew stronger. ABC was asking more and more questions: What were Bing and his people going to do about it? Weren't they convinced by now that transcribing Bing was never going to be any good? How much longer would it be before Philco pulled out? Or Bing forced out? Fortunately for everybody, Murdo kept his head down and ploughed on.

(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE)



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WIN THIS RARE CROSBY RECORD

NEW COMPETITION!

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Last issue, you may remember that we offered this rare Crosby reissue as prize for the best anecdote concerning you and your interest in Bing. Well, the response was staggering! We were absolutely underwelmed with entries. In fact, we received not a single one!!! And so, we have hastily re-designed the entry format.

On the opposite is a photograph of Bing. Obviously. What you have to do is tell us what Bing is saying. Not what he's really saying of course, but what it looks like he's saying! Send your entries to the club address on page 2. Let's hope that we have a better response this time. Revised closing date is Feb 28th, 1987.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT
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(Mercifully edited!)

Welcome to the ninth AGM of the Victorian Bing Crosby Society. It has been a quite interesting year for Crosby record releases - the Chronological Bing Crosby series continued, the Golden Years in Digital Stereo, the new Compact Discs featuring Bing and a couple of LP's featuring TV material.

In 1986, sadly, we lost one of the club's most enthusiastic and long-standing members - Les Saynor. I doubt whether any individual contributed more or more to the club's success than did Les. All of us who knew Les miss him very much indeed.

One of the major changes for the club was, for the second time in as many years, the need to find a new venue for our film evenings. The State Film Centre was ideal, but unfortunately, they could no longer offer us the type of dates we required for our screenings. Thanks to member Bill Grenfell, however, we found the AMP Theatrette which is every bit as good as the State Film Centre.

We've had a few changes of personnal in the club's committee in the past year. Apart from Les Saynor, George Styles for personal reasons decided to retire. George made a terrific contribution during his time with us and we thank him for his help. Both gaps in the local committee however, have been admirably filled by Ted and Ada Paradissis and we take this opportunity to welcome them officially to this side of the group.

On the other side of the world, our American Representative Richard Pearson also decided to call it a day. Richard not only created the position of U.S. rep. for the club, he also made a point of actively building membership for us and maintaining the enthusiasm of members in his country. Even when he decided to resign, Richard did not do so until he had found his replacement - Marck Scrimger. And we also take this opportunity to welcome Mark officially.

Thanks go too, to Ken Orren, Keith Dorman, Josie Conway, Sylvia Harding and Bill Bennett - all who help keep us going. Not forgetting Neville Wragg and Clarke Sinclair and Wally and Maureen Carson.

And thanks to you all - who help keep the memory of Bing Crosby alive.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

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Statement of Receipts and Payments - year ended 30.9.86.

BALANCE 30/9/86			1159.89
RECEIPTS			
Fees		1768.67	
Videos, cassette library		1345.46	
Sale of records		662.00	
Raffle, film nights, BBQ		1826.30	
MISCELLANEOUS			
Donation	25.00		
Book sales	5.00		
Sheet music sales	23.38		
Bank interest	33.03		
		86.41	
TOTAL RECEIPTS			5688.84
			6848.73
PAYMENTS			
Books, cassettes & records		1078.10	
Raffles		51.10	
Printing, postage newsletter		2935.61	
Film & Video hire		83.00	
MISCELLANEOUS			
Refreshments	115.15		
Theatre rent	953.50		
Stationary	47.49		
Spit Roast	350.00		
Sheet music	23.00		
Bank charges	9.16		
Sundry	32.15		
		1530.45	
TOTAL PAYMENTS			5678.26
BALANCE 30/9/86			1170.47

RECONCILIATION

Balance 30/9/86	1159.89	credit
Receipts to 30/9/86	5688.84	
	6848.73	
Payments to 30/9/86	5678.26	
Balance 30/9/86 - as per bank statement	1170.47	credit

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THE BING CROSBY STORY
A CELEBRATION OF HIS LIFE & SONGS

****

By Ian Barnes:

Imagine my surprise in August last year when holidaying in Bournemouth, England, in discovering "The Bing Crosby Story" playing at the Pier Theatre. Although I hadn't heard of the artists presenting the show - Teddy Johnson and Pearl Carr, my ex-UK wife recognized them as 'troupers' from way back!

Within 5 minutes of spying the posters advertising the weekly show, we had purchased 2 tickets for the following Sunday night. The Pier Theatre at Bournemouth adds character to any show because it literally is at the end of the pier, 100 metres out to sea! Having braved the elements that night in reaching the theatre, we joined the 200 - 300 other brave soles and settled down to enjoy the evening. And enjoy it we did! Teddy Johnson compiled the story, narrated and sang the songs. He didn't attempt to impersonate Bing, but with a very pleasant voice, sang in the Crosby style. The background story was laced with songs tracing the Crosby career from the twenties to the seventies.

Pearl Carr joined Teddy for some marvellous duets and the whole night was a joy as the crown readily joined in with familiar Crosby tunes. There we a few surprises for me however, with a few stories about Crosby that I didn't know and a song that was new to me. Written in 1931 by Harry Barris, it was called "At Your Command". I would be interested to know if it is still available on any recordings so that I can purchase a copy. The Teddy Johnson version was so good that I could almost hear a full-voiced Bing singing this number.

(Ian sent us a copy of the programme, part of which we reproduce on the following pages. "At Your Command" is one of those 1931 Crosby tracks that was available in one form or another since it was first issued! I'm surprised that Ian hasn't caught up with it before. One of the most recent LP re-issues was the 1975 Vocalian (UK) pressing "Many Happy Returns Of the Day", VLP 1. And of course, the track is in the Club's Cassette library on tape BR 5. Harry Barris supplies the solo piano backing.

Pier Theatre

Bournemouth

UNDER THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION OF
MALCOLM THORNLEY
Director of Beach Leisure Services

Commencing 26th May 1985
for Summer Season

Stepham Daler Promotions Limited

Present

THE BING CROSBY STORY

Written, narrated and sung by

TEDDY JOHNSON with **PEARL CARR**

Music by THE NEW RHYTHM BOYS
Directed by BRYAN JOHNSON

THE BING CR

THE BING CROSBY STORY

Stepham Daler Promotions Limited are proud to present a worthy tribute to the late and undeniably great Bing Crosby. This is not an attempt to impersonate such a world-wide and much-loved star; rather an insight to a long and glittering career told in words and music. His music will live for ever, but equally interesting is the story itself which Teddy Johnson has followed with dedication as a true devotee of the man who he admired, not only for his talent and artistry, but also for the man himself. Bing Crosby fans can relive the magic of the songs they love so much, whilst younger people can appreciate why the man and his music still live on in the hearts of millions.

It was whilst Teddy and Pearl were entertaining on a world cruise that the opportunity came for Teddy to realise a long-cherished dream – and a one man show, *The Bing Crosby Story*, came into being. There being many American passengers on board, Teddy felt some apprehension, but the performance found immediate favour, so much so that when a statue to the memory of Bing Crosby was to be unveiled in his home town of Tacoma, Washington, Teddy and Pearl were invited by KathyCrosby (Bing's widow) to be principal guests of honour at the memorial occasion. The ultimate accolade during this visit came when Teddy received an invitation from 'The Bing Crosby Historical Society' to present his tribute in the town where Bing was born. This one man show has now been adapted into a full two-hour production with Teddy guiding his audience through the story illustrated with so many of the great songs

For Stepham Daler Promotions Limited
Assistant to Renee Stepham — Stephanie Dawes

OSBY STORY

TEDDY JOHNSON

Teddy entered the profession at the age of 17 playing percussion and doing vocals with well-known bands. For two years he presented record programmes every night on the English section of Radio Luxembourg so laying claim to be the first 'Disc Jockey' to be heard daily in these islands.

On returning to England, Columbia records gave him a recording contract. His first disc, 'Beloved be Faithful' was an instant hit, his second, 'Tennessee Waltz', an even bigger hit, followed by many more.

PEARL CARR

During her solo days, Pearl Carr was one of the most heard voices in British Radio, topping the 'Melody Maker' poll for British singers, was the lead singer with the popular 'Keynotes' and sang with every well-known band in the country, as well as having her own series, *In the Blue of the Evening*. Many people still recall with affection her series, *Breakfast with Braden*.

Two particular highlights must be the broadcasts she did with Hoagy Carmichael and Bob Hope.

Teddy and Pearl first met when working as soloists on a radio programme with Stanley Black called 'Black Magic'. The producer soon had them singing duets which quickly became a feature of the programme. Their marriage in 1955 increased the demand for them as duetists, and they appeared on nearly every major music/variety show on both BBC and ITV. For two years they were resident on BBC TV's *Crackerjack*. From 1958 to 1960 Teddy was resident host and singer on ATV's *Music Shop*. 1959 found them firmly established in the hearts of Great Britain and Europe when they came second in the Eurovision Contest with the song 'Sing Little Birdie', soon to be followed by such hits as 'How Wonderful to Know' and 'My Dearest Dear', and working alongside such stars as Morecambe and Wise, Bruce Forsyth, Ken Dodd, Dickie Henderson and Harry Worth. Apart from their obvious talent for singing, their warmth goes out to every audience they entertain.

BRYAN JOHNSON *The Director*

Where to start is the problem with director of *The Bing Crosby Story*. Like his brother Teddy, Bryan started singing professionally at a very young age. Having won a place in the 'Westminster Abbey Special Choir' he was taken for an audition to L A M D A for a part in a film, and came away with a three-year scholarship. On leaving the Academy he joined the late Sir Donald Wolfit Company, followed by the Old Vic, now the National Theatre. It was whilst with the Old Vic that Bernard Delfont persuaded him to join a pre West End tour of *The Student Prince*. Having been blessed with a powerful baritone voice, he spent many years going from drama to musical comedy until a recording contract came his way that took him straight to the London Palladium as leading man in *The Peep Show*. He was now much in demand both as singer and actor and the years have been spent both singing and acting in every major theatre in this country and abroad. He even followed his brother and sister-in-law into the Eurovision Song Contest with the hit song 'Looking High High High' gaining the same as his family, second place. The past few years have seen him as both director, adaptor and leading actor in such diverse entertainment as 'Scrooge' in *Christmas Carol*, 'Rochester' in *Jane Eyre* and *Murder at the Vicarage*. It is a source of great pride and pleasure that he now finds himself directing his brother Teddy and the lovely Pearl Carr.

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WRITER'S BLOCK
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A short story by Ted Paradissis

I knew I wouldn't be able to write a story about Bing Crosby. I just knew it. After sitting at my desk for two hours, staring at the block of white paper before me, I was becoming more and more frustrated, more and more weary. Waves of tensions welled up inside me as the day dragged on. Though it was still morning I noticed with swelling, helpless alarm that my study had begun to grow dimmer, darker, gloomier. My head ached so I gingerly removed it from its narrow neck-socket to rest it on my arms. I blinked and the light was bright again as the walls began to slide back. The bookshelves grew bigger, ever taller, ever wider until I realized I was in a large library furnished with every modern facility for research. Research, I thought, in a detached sort of way. Of course. To write about Bing one would have to find him first. One would have to study him.

I tried to collect my thoughts: had I unwittingly laid my head upon the block? Hastily I slotted my sconce back in and cast curious eyes around to see if a computer was available. One was, so, switching on, I pressed my message on the keyboard. I watched nervously as the answer lit up on the screen:

"Hi Im Ernest Your information is
Harry Lillis Bing Crosby 1904-1977"

Impatiently I played the keyboard: "Correct date of birth." Ernest immediately apologized:

"Sorry 1901"

I insisted firmly, imperiously: "Full name and full correct dates." The computer squirmed, answering in two lines:

"Very sorry old information
Harry Lillis Bing Crosby 2 May 1903 - 14 October 1977"

I wasn't sure whether that birthday was the 2nd or the 3rd of May, so I let the quivering machine off the hook. I knew Bing had been mentioned in a number of publications

during the past year, but at that moment I wanted more precise information. Resolutely I pressed the keys again: "Bing Crosby text or photos. Sun and Herald last 12 months."

Ernest's screen glowed with excited efficiency:

"The Sun 31 October 24 December 1985
10 January 24 April 1 May 24 June
17 July 1986

The Herald 11 November 1985 11 Febuary 1986"

I pounced on the keyboard in triumph: "Correct spelling of February." The machine cringed in its apologetic response and at once made the necessary orthographic amendment. My answer was to switch it off since the dates had remained imprinted on my mind.

Serene and etherial, I drifted off in the direction of a sign that said 'Serials', intending to give myself the pleasure of sitting down comfortable to savour the articles and look at the photos in the two newspapers. I found the relevant issues of the Sun and the Herald piled neatly on the table at which I had chosen to sit. When I picked up the first newspaper, its pages began to turn with remarkable speed. I couldn't slow them down, and I found I had no desire to do so. Yet it seemed to be able to read and remember everything that was important for my purpose, every single item about BIng's films, records and activities.

When the last page had stopped turning and the newspapers had folded themselves again in a neat pile before me, I sat very still at the table, stunned. But, a moment later, it occured to me that I would like to hear Bing's resonant voice once more, in all its fluid mellowness. I stood up, not knowing which way to turn until something inside me impelled me to head for the street.

Outside, I floated nonchalantly past the staring faces of pedestrians until I stopped before a large shop with two rows of television sets flanking its entrance and stretching back into its luminous depths. With the tables on which they were standing they reminded me of two lines of helpless prisoners with hugh heads and flickering, reproachful faces.

For several minutes I tried to discern a deeper meaning in their changing pictures but couldn't. Then I was shocked out of my puzzlement by Bing's voice booming out of the third television set on my right. There was no mistaking the characteristic tones and cunning phrasing, the inherant volume, the vocal richness that had dominated the worlds of crooning and recording for so many years. I moved a little to the left to get a better view of the set. It did not depict Crosby. What it did show was Bourke Street Mall with all the yuletide decorations in place. I knew it was the week before Christmas: in the bright summer sun, troops of determined shoppers were beseiging the big stores, charging into them, then streaming out triumphantly with their Christmas plunder. Bing's warm voice soared over this busy scene. It was issuing from some mysterious amplified source, and was resounding merrily as he warbled the familiar Christmas songs.

After a while I became aware of the confused cooing and mooing sounds coming from several of the sets situated further back. I glanced at all the performers depicted, men and women, listening to them in turn: each voice quickly untangled itself musically, straightening out into a graphic line of melody suited to the singer. Some of the entertaineers had a pleasing appearance or manner, as well as strong, clear voices with good tonal range. However, I couldn't help but suspect that modern electronic recording techniques had boosted their vocal capabilities, at least in some cases. There were other performers too, who were neither as gifted nor as skilled. Their lesser voices, flat, wining, croaking, struck me as being less agreeable, and their studied gestures and egregious gyrations interested me not at all.

I turned my attention to the third set on my left, at the same time adjusting my viewing position slightly. I was looking at a carefully-constructed, cleverly-lit scene on the stage of one of the Melbourne theatres. Actors and actresses were speaking, gesticulating. I was looking at a play. With a strange mental flutter my mind flew straight to the name of the theatre and the play in question. In a moment my happy intuition was confirmed

by the appearance of a chorus line or capital letters dancing into place at the bottom of the picture on the box: NEIL SIMON'S BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS. But within a minute or two the picture and the letters faded, only to be replaced by a shot of the audience getting up and moving about. Now the capital letters at the bottom formed the word INTERVAL.

"Hang on!" I reflected. "I remember something. THe action of this play takes place in 1937. If they offer any music at all during the interval, surely it ought to be that of the most famous crooner of the period..."

I watched the picture and waited expectantly. Ah, I was right! So that was what they had chosen to play! While the people in the picture were still strolling down the theatre aisles I found myself listening to what was evidently an early recording (1933?) of Bing's version of Did you ever see a dream walking?

However, the sound faded before the end of the song. It was replaced by Bing's voice coming from the second set on the left. I turned, mentally shifted gears, and began following the story of Frances Farmer, who had starred with the crooner in the 1936 film Rhythm on the range.

"Frances," I murmered and, as this new sound faded in its turn, my attention was grabbed by the second set on my right. In it I saw a motor coach, full of travellers, moving along a busy road that I eventually identified as the Maroondah Highway leading out of Melbourne. At the same time the passengers - and I - were listening to a series of Crosby songs that succeed one another with unusual speed. Each melody was easily recognizable but merged quickly with the next one.

"That's a funny cassette the driver's playing," I mused as capital letters at the bottom of the picture informed me: MELBOURNE TO MARYSVILLE 6-6-86. (American readers beware: that's the sixth of June, 1986). This line was replaced by: QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HOLIDAY WEEKEND.

The front set on my right took over to depict the return journey in anothr coach, with the same driver. Sure

enough, the capitals and figures soon fell in smartly for inspection: MARYSVILLE TO MELBOURNE 9-6-86. A different set of Crosby songs was being played for the passengers, but poor editing had resulted in a large number of slow, plump sentimental Irish ballads being herded - you could almost see them kicking - into the one cassette. My attention began to flag, but as each song took very little time to merge with the next one, I knew that the cassette would soon stop playing.

It did, and I turned with interest to the front television set on my left. Somehow, the correct key clicked in my mind: I was watching the 1983 biopic Grace Kelly in which Cheryl Ladd was playing the title role. An actor made up as Bing did a couple of scenes with her, one of them from the very memorable 1954 movie The Country Girl. It was the first time I had seenCrosby presented thus in a film. Figures and capital letters winked at me: CHANNEL 10 27-7-86 8.30 P.M.

I had seen and heard enough. I Was already feeling the need to return to the library which, it now occurred to me, was humanity's brain trust and memory bank. No sooner felt than done. I zoomed back forthwith.

In the bright light inside, I sad down before my old adversary, Ernest the computer. I switched on, pressed my commands. The screen remained blank. I switched off, tried agaion. Nothing. I persisted. At my fifth attempt the screen glowed:

"Searching searching"

I had asked for a selection of a dozen books available in Melbourne and containing material about Bing. For each book I had requested the author's name, the title, the place of publication, the publisher, the year of publication and the current price for July-August 1986. I waited resolutely, reflecting on the fact that some of the books would undoubtedly contain more information about Bing than others.

32 Unexpectedly, a list of eleven books appeared on the screen. I counted them carefully before issuing instructions: "Ernest, a dozen is twelve. Add one book and the same detailed information." The computer obeyed at once. Still, I could discover no kind of order in the list on the screen.

Presently I commanded: "List by alphabetical order of authors' surnames." THe machine grovelled:

> "Sorry Very sorry Hard to compute
> Im trying Im trying Some books have
> two or more authors"

Nevertheless, it did finally list the books:

"Janice Anderson History of Movie Comedy London
Deans International Publishing 1985 $$19.95

John Douglas Eames The Paramount Story London
Octopus Books 1985 $34.95

William Robert Faith Bob Hope: A Life in Comedy London
Granada 1983 $10.00

Stephen Farber & Marc Green Hollywood Dynasties New York
Delilah 1984 $10.00

Joel W. Finler The Movie Directors Story London
Octopus Books 1985 $29.95

Clive Hirschhorn The Hollywood Musical London
Octopus Books 1981 New Edition Price variable

Joel Hirschhorn etc Rating the Movie Stars Skokie Ill
Publications Ltd 1983 $1.99

John Kobal A History of Movie Musicals: Gotta Sing Gotta Dance
London Wattle Books 1983 $24.95

Jeffrey Robinson Teamwork London & New York
Proteus 1982 $10.00

John Springer A Pictorial History of the Movie Musical
Secaucus N.J. Castle Books Undated $12.00

John Russell Taylor Ingrid Bergman New York
Saint Martin's Press 1983 $10.00

Julie Welch & Louise Brody Leading Men London
Octopus Conran 1985 $29.95

While I examined the names, titles and prices, making notes, Ernest blinked, grunted and coughed several times, exhausted apparently with the effort of presenting the list correctly. All the time, I had the curious, tingling sensation that Bing was in the library.

"Where?" I asked myself.

"Round and about," I answered. "He's part of the history of the twentieth century. People know him, esteem him. Some would venture to call him friend, might even consider him a member of the family, the American cousin who pays an occasional visit and cheers everyone up with his quiet ways and polite good humour....."

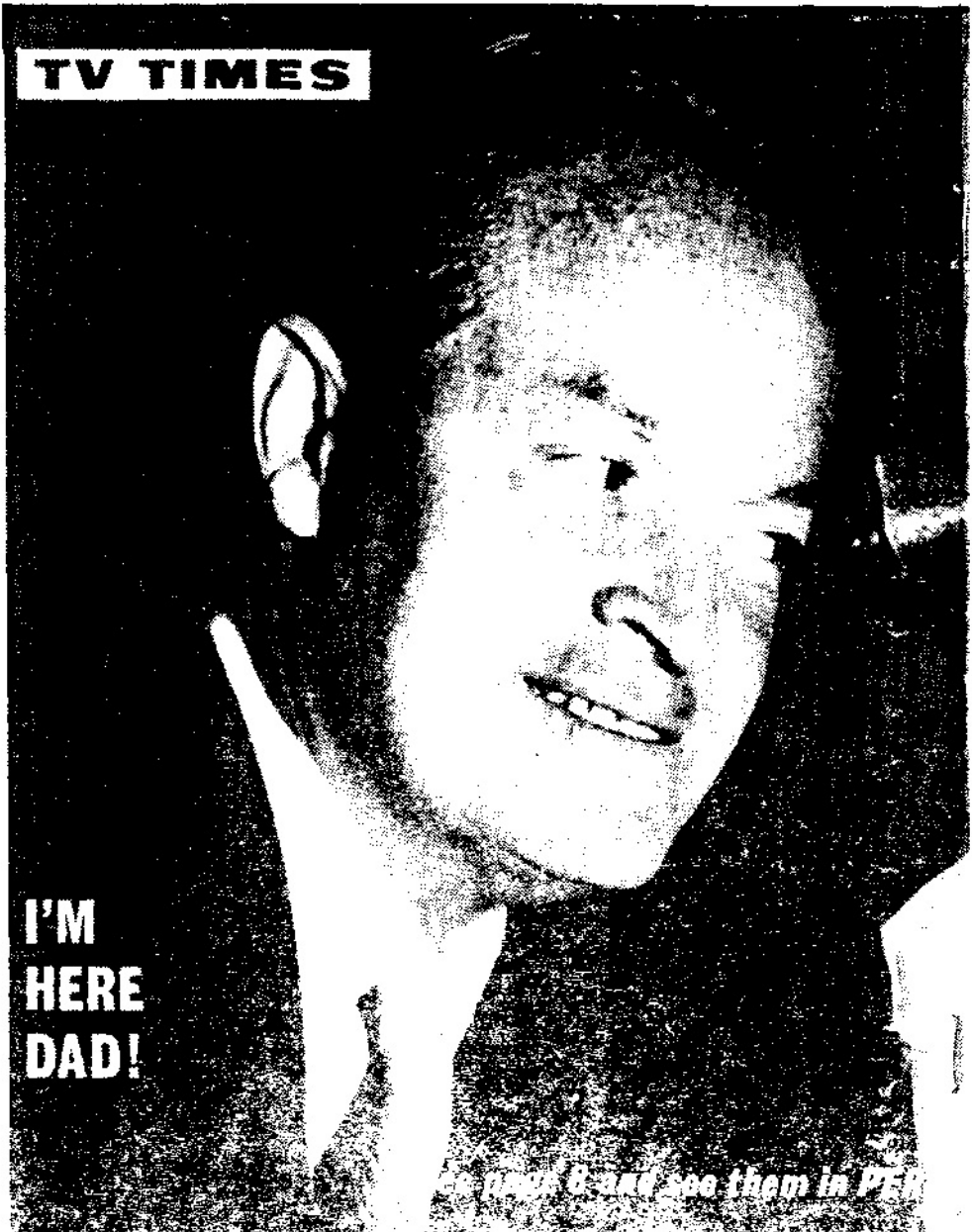
My reflections were interrupted by a sudden stutter on the screen of the computer:

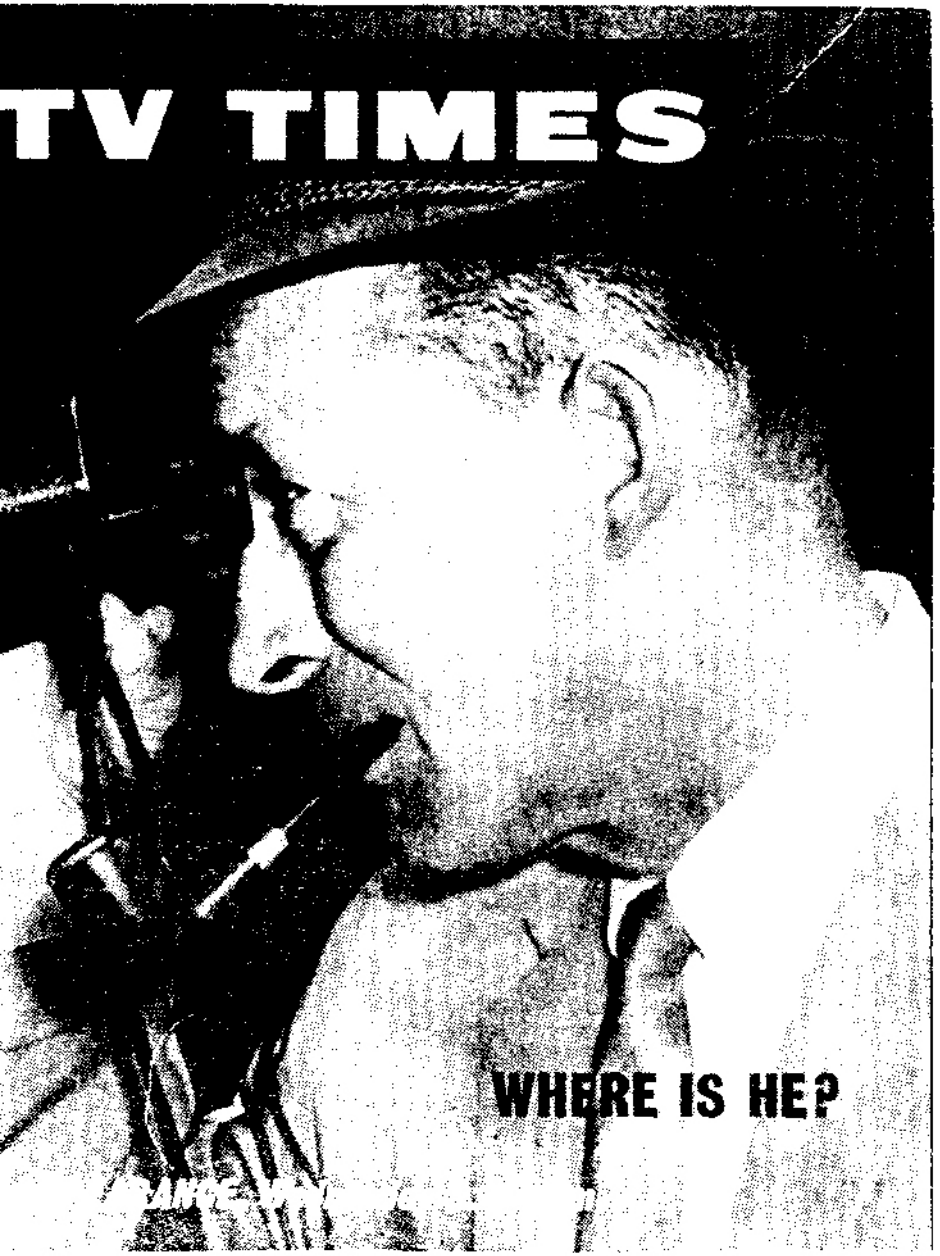
" O O Overload O O Overload
Over lo load"

Then with a sputter and a convulsive shudder the screen went blank. As I opened my eyes I shivered, glanced at the block of white paper lying defencelessly before me and knew I really had no reason to attack it. After all, there was no need to write a story about Bing Crosby. Other performers might occupy men's minds for the moment, but Bing lurked everywhere, ubiquitous, smiling, underpinning by his very presence the development of the popular song in our time. Popping up when least expected, at any moment.

The singer of the century. END

(THE PHILIP CROSBY?!)


TV TIMES
I'M HERE DAD!


TV TIMES
WHERE IS HE?

THIS MAN HOPE...

by BING CROSBY

TO start, he's not even Bob Hope. He is Leslie Townes Hope. His defence of this will be that I'm Harry Lillis Crosby, not Bing. But my nickname came honestly.

I certainly didn't go through the phone book looking for names like Packy East which he used once as an amateur boxer.

Later he became known as Rembrandt Hope—he was on canvas so much. When fans asked how his boxing career was coming, he'd say, "Three and three."

"Won three and lost three, you mean?" they asked.

"No," he explained. "Knocked out three times. Didn't show up three times."

Thus he began his acting career in a horizontal position . . .

I have worked in seven "Road" films with him. During filming *Road to Hong Kong* the Crosby family shared a big house in the country with the Hope family.

Working with him taught me one thing — don't share a house with him. You could end up paying all the rent. Sharing a house with him taught me another — don't work with him—unless your lawyer goes over the contracts.

Actually I have a deep affection for old Ski-Nose. You have to work with him and live with him, too. I'm never offended when he calls me Money Bags, Old Flab, the Groaner and such terms of endearment.

But don't let him kid you about money. He's got Treasury specimens that are out of print. When he pauses after telling a joke in that delayed-action timing style of his, it's not to cue the audience to laugh.

He's counting the house to make sure the promoter doesn't short-change him.

The same with golf. He counts his score and wins on the first tee.

With luck, I'm in the low 70's, he's about six strokes higher. But I never can beat him. He demands too many strokes, won't play until he gets them.

When people ask him who wins when we play he says:

"The one who cheats the most." They think he's joking!

He's 100 per cent extrovert. Got to have an audience. If people don't come around he puts 'em on the payroll and orders them to come.

I suspect that's why he saves his money. If the audience ever quits coming, he'll probably make a personal appearance at the baseball stadium—and pay the people to laugh.

I like working with old Ski-Snoot. There's just one trouble for us now. We're too old to get the girl and too proud to play grandfathers.

THIS MAN CROSBY

by BOB HOPE

I HAVE known Harry Lillis since I was a small child and he was an aging Thespian—sort of an elderly matinee idol who only worked at night. He has always been full of surprises.

I take that back. Bing isn't that old. He just seems that old. And we haven't known each other that long. But one thing is true. Bing is full of surprises.

Why, take my latest television special as an example. Everyone was so surprised when it was announced that Bing would be a guest on the show. To tell the truth, no one was more surprised than I.

I was rehearsing the show in Hollywood and Bing's nurse wheeled him into the studio one afternoon. I thought the poor, dear soul had just come to watch the younger set in action.

But he took me aside, and, though he didn't say so specifically, I knew he needed some extra spending money, what with his new family and new grandchildren . . . So I gave old Harry a job! Here is how it all began... I was a youngster living in Cleveland, Ohio. It was only a few years after we arrived from England. I was a new recruit in the Boy Scouts. One day I helped an elderly woman across the street and it turned out to be Bing.

There I go again . . . sorry. This is *not* the way it happened.

It was in the summer of 1932. I was in vaudeville—not a star, but I was earning enough for my 4 o'clock tea break. I had worked my way through the provinces and finally landed in New York City.

Bing also arrived about the same time—from a band tour that ended its run playing at a dance hall off Broadway.

Coincidentally, both of us were signed to perform on the same bill at the Capitol Theatre on Broadway and 51st Street. I was the comedian on the bill and Bing was the crooner. Groaner, I think, would be a better word.

We quickly became backstage friends. We sort of complimented each other's personalities.

Many years later in Hollywood, producer Don Hartman at Paramount, said the reason our Road movies were so successful was the very fact that we did complement each other's personalities.

Bing and I played the movie houses all that summer and we even shared a cold-water flat, five flights up some rickety stairs for a month.

At the end of the summer I auditioned and won a small role in a Broadway show that was going into rehearsal. Bing headed back to Hollywood and a job singing with a band.

We corresponded and saw each other occasionally, but our careers didn't cross again until 1937.

Bing was already a movie star. And I had started on Broadway the previous year in *Red, Hot and Blue* with Jimmy Durante and Ethel Merman. A scout for Paramount liked me in the show and I signed a movie contract.

When I finally got to Paramount, it was like old times again with Bing.

A studio executive, seeing how much fun we had together, got the idea for us to get together for a movie, and that's how we eventually did our first Road movie—*Road to Singapore* in 1940.

Though Bing and I enjoyed working on our television appearance this year just as much as we enjoyed our 1940 assignment I am getting tired of helping the old boy into his girdle!

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NEW MEMBERS

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We're happy to have welcomed the following new members in the past year.

Larry Kieran, 57 Park Tce East, Apt B37, New York NY USA 10034
Greg Goe, 9 Donnelly Rd, Hallam, 3803
George Earl, 22 Terry St, Balwyn 3103
Vera Watson, 42 Links Ave, Concord, NSW 2137
Martin & Susan Arnold, 13 Daly St, Frankston 3199
Stan & Joyce Barker, 19 Cygna St, Preston 3072
Carl M Newton, 2421 Leisure Lane, Centralia, Wn 98531 USA
Bill Eunson, 18 Masons Sr, Blackburn 3130
Maurice Janson, PO Box 5, Umina Beach, NSW 2257
Rune Edvardsson, Aspvaegan 6, 640 43 Arla, Sweden
Ragnar Uppman, Oscar Arpis V 49, S-752 50, Uppsala, Sweden
Michael & Elizabeth Warren, 2 Barnett St, Hampton 3188
Kenneth Foster, 36 Francis St, Blackburn 3130
Joan Ann Hunt, 15 Milford Hill, Batford, Halpenden Herts U.K.
Lars Roth, Notarievagen 23, S-237 00, Bjerred, Sweden
Ian Mackenzie, 1/16 Collingwood St, Sandringham 3191
John C Marshall, 39 Kings Rd, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 CQD U.K.
William Watt, 18 Yootha Crt, Rye 3941
Joe Brickell, 1 Redland Park, Bath BA 21SL U.K.
Norman WIliam Jones, 79 Albion Rd, Baglan, Port Talbot, West Glam UK
Alan & Freda Glenn, 3 Lotus Crt, Cheltenham 3192
Jean and Les Kaye, 21 Barton St, West Footscray 3012
Ken & Sylvia Lee, 12 Garnet St, West Essendon
Stephen Russell, 500 Perry Ave, Belle Vernon, Pa 15012 USA
Jack Higginson, 10 Holly Ave, Hollywell, Qld 4216 (Welcome back Jack!)
Malcolm Connell, 19 Iluka Place, Mornington 3931
Malcolm Gordon Cooney, 2 St Helens St, Lindisfarne, Tas 7015
George Fry, 4/22 Broadway, Bon Beach 3196
Robert Pindall, 36 Southdale Rd, Carlton, Nottingham NG4 1EY UK
Keith Milroy, 4/107 Landells Rd, Pascoe Vale 3044
David Ward, 51 St Andrews St, Lincoln LN5 7UD U.K.
John Seit, PO Box 167, Northcote 3070
Isabell Ruff, 4/1 Reserve Rd, West Melton 3337
John & Sandra Collins, 9 Frudal Cresc, Knoxfield 3180
Raymond Mendoza, 188/332 Park St, South Melbourne 3205
Arthur Turner (UK). (For the life of me Arthur, I can't find your address anywhere! BM)

****
OTHER CROSBY CLUBS
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Around the world, there are a number of other Bing Crosby Associations, all worthy of your support.

THE BING CROSBY HISTORIAL SOCIETY, Ken Twiss, President, PO Box 216, Tacoma, Washington 98401, USA.

INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE, Reg Bristo, Sec/Editor, 7 Greenmeadow Close, Cwmbran, Gwent NP 44 4 PJ, U.K.

THE BING CROSBY COLLECTORS SOCIETY, "Bingville News", John Bassett, 15 Oast Way, Rochford, Essex, SS4 1RZ, U.K.

THE NEW BING CROSBY PHOTO CLUB, Frank Murphy President, 32 Ferndale Avenue, Wallsend, Tyne & Wear, NE28 7NE, England.

BING'S FRIENDS & COLLECTORS SOCIETY, Larry Gunn, President, 170 Terminal Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94205, USA.

KATHRYN CROSBY CLUB, Caroline Dawson, Pres, 1374 Broadway, 7-D, West Sommerville, MA 02144 USA.

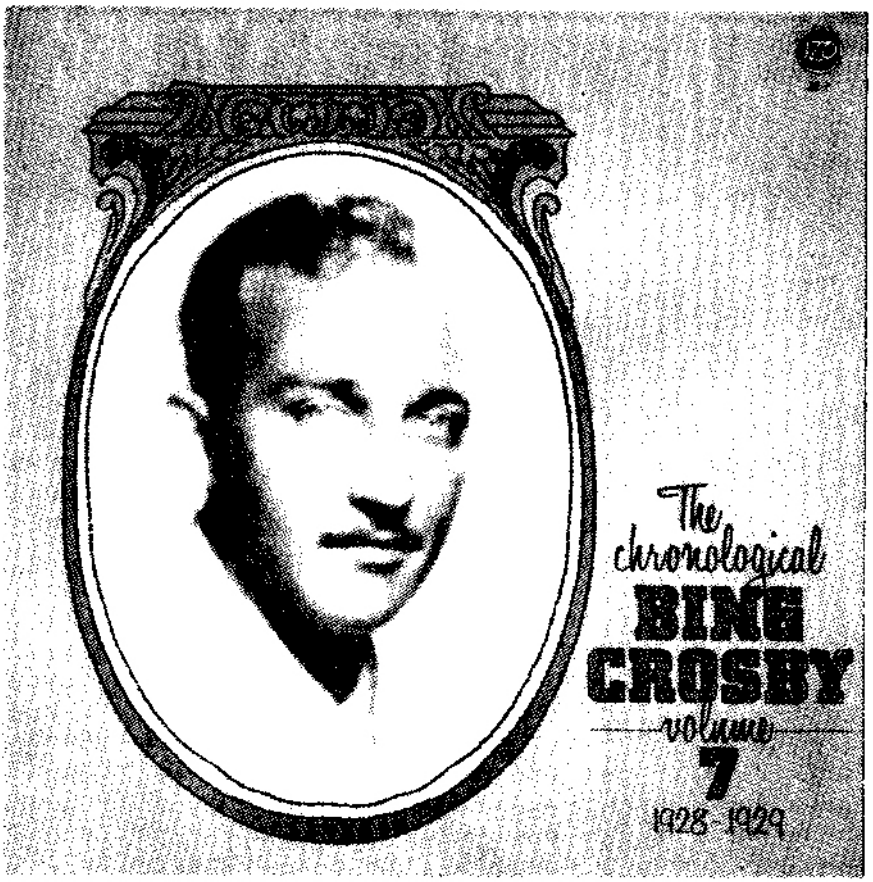
'HOW IT WAS DONE IN HOLLYWOOD' DEPT.

Bing poses outdoors for a publicity still for "Paris Honeymoon"

NEW RELEASES

BING CROSBY IN DEMAND - MCA (UK) MCG 6004

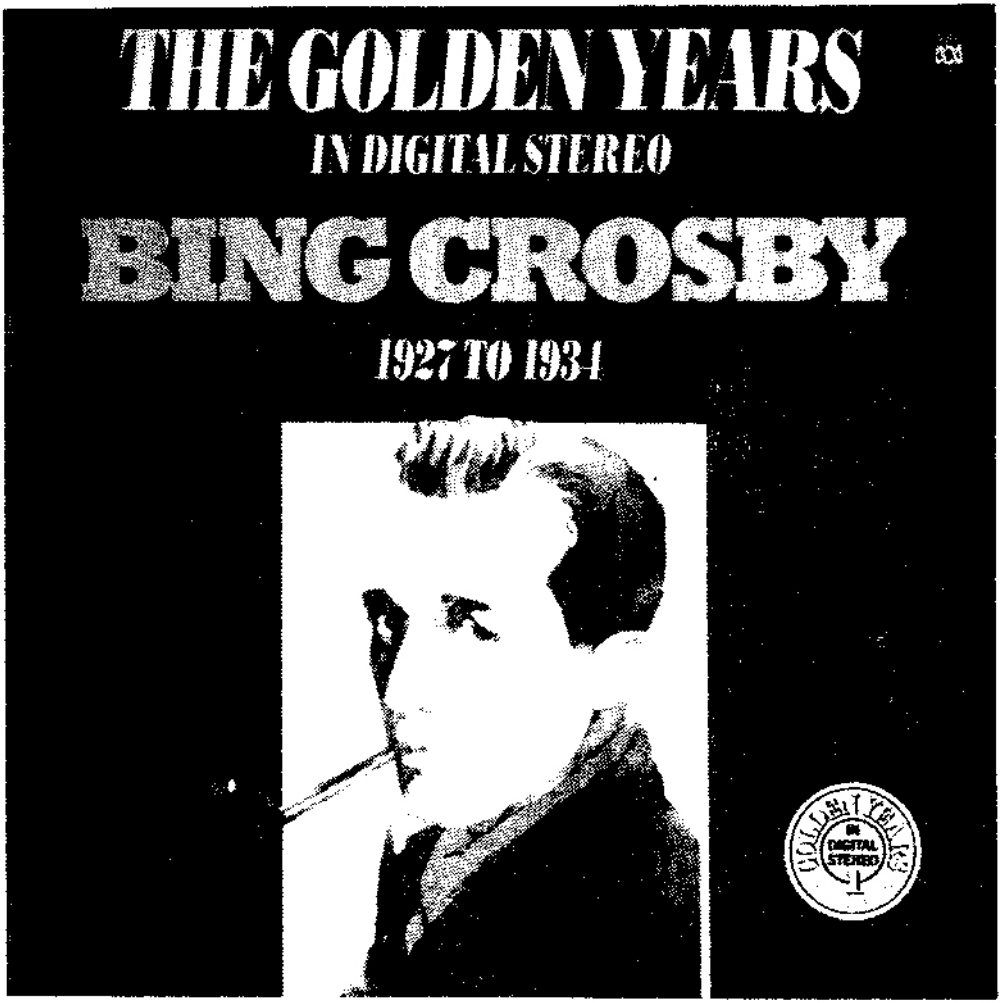
This exciting new release from the UK boasts a mid-30's colour photo of Bing on the cover and twenty hard-to-find tracks. Some are even alternate takes to those usually available: Getting to know you, Love walked in, The Isle of Innisfree, The



waltz you saved for me, Lost in loveliness, Dearly beloved, Golden Earrings, Out ofthis world, Rosalie, Vaya con dios, La Vie En Rose, Beautiful love, Indian Summer, It had to be you, The rose of Tralee, The story of Sorrento, I'll remember April, The one rose, Yours is my heart alone, and Granada.

THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY - JONZO (UK) JZ - 7

Another excellent addition to the series, this disc features Bing's 8 tracks with the Ipana Troubadors & the Dorsey Brothers plus his first two solos under his own name, among others. Highly recommended as are all in the series. A limited number are available by mail from the club for $13 + $4 post & packing.



THE GOLDEN YEARS IN DIGITAL STEREO – BING CROSBY – ABC (Aust) L38560

A most important and interesting local release. (See following story.)
Tracks: Someday sweetheart, Mary, So the Bluebirds & the Blackbirds, I surrender dear, Blue of the night, Please, Thanks, The last round-up, St Louis Blues, Black Moonlight, Beautiful girl, We'll make hay while the sun shines, Temptation, Dream walking, She reminds me of You, Love in bloom.

****
ROBERT PARKER - A STATEMENT OF INTENT
****

It all began when I started collecting records in Sydney at around the age of 12 in 1948. By 1954 I had purchased my first light-weight pick-up (the Acos GP 20 of fond memory). A twelve inch Rola co-axial speaker in a large vented enclosure made me aware of the considerable frequencyrange to be found in 78 RPM discs. Experiments with top-cut filters and equalisers followed, in an attempt to improve the signal-to-noise ratio. 1974 found me running my own sound studio in London, Molinare Limited - and able to indulge my hunger for better sound reproduction from the early discs with a feast of the latest noise reduction equipment from the States.

What I discovered in those thirty years of experiment was too good to keep to myself.

My objective has been to reproduce early records with the sound quality of a live performance - in which the band plays in a three dimensional space, and the walls, floor and roof of the venue contribute to our enjoyment of the sound of the instruments. In fact, it is largely from acoustic environment that we are able to judge the emotional impact of the performance. Throughout the 78 RPM era, studio walls were treated to be non-reflective - as dead as a dodo. The three dimensional spread of the instruments was squeezed into a point source and dynamics were crushed to minimize perception of the disc surface noise. The reproduced sound was a travesty of the original live performance - dulled, distorted and diminished. And yet, we are extremely fortunate that, particularly from the inception of the Western Electric system in 1925, the quality of much of the information to be recovered from the early discs is very high indeed, with a much wider frequency response than the original recording engineers could have realised. They simply did not have pick-ups and loudspeakers capable of playing back what had been recorded in the grooves.

My method therefore is, firstly, to recover as much of the information recorded as possible, and secondly, to turn it into a stereo format which will return to us an impression of the spaciousness and emotional impact of a live performance.

Naturally, I expect that this approach may be controversial, particularly in view of the disastrous results of earlier record company attempts at "Stereo Reprocessing", which sounded quite abominable.

However, the reaction to my radio programmes over the past couple of years has shown that at both "grass roots" level and among the leading critics (see press reviews following), there is a remarkable degree of approval for stereo enhancement, provided it is properly engineered to provide a more "musical" sound than the original mono.

Even more importantly, there are a great many young people who have previously rejected early recordings (because of the unfamiliar and/or poor sound quality) but have since had interest awakened by hearing the great performances with a sound more akin to that of modern recordings.

Of considerable importance to the sound quality achieved (particularly where the LP albums are concerned) was my decision, in 1982, to use a digital recording system to prepare my master tapes, the Sony PCM F1.

It produces a clarity of sound which in my experience cannot be matched by quarter inch tape. The difference in sound quality between the digital transfer and a replay of the original disc is almost indistinguishable. The greatest benefit of digital is its almost uncanny preservation of the dynamics of the original - and the purity of sound obtainable from even the earliest discs. In contrast, even one generation of recording to analogue tape produces a modification of sound quality, readily apparent in direct "A/B" comparison.

For the transfer engineer, the whole exercise is a subjective balancing act - juggling opposing factors such as high frequency response and surface noise and distortion on the one hand and deep bassresponse and rumble on the other. However, I am quite confident that a careful assessment of my work will reveal in the transfers a wider frequency range (both at the top and bottom ends) coupled with a lower background noise than has hitherto been attainable; an improved dynamic range, with cleaner attack on transients; and a generally great clarity of sound, which reveals much more inner detail in the music.

ROBERT PARKER

****
WHAT THE BRITISH PAPERS SAID
****

(Robert Parker's radio series "Jazz Classics in Stereo" was broadcast on BBC Radio 2 between January and June this year. Following are some of the reviews.)

"Australian sound engineer Robert Parker's almost miraculous re-processing of ancient jazz recordings to state-of-the-art stereo has to be heard to be believed."
ROBERT COWAN - Standard

"There is no doubt that the benefits, in particular the way instruments are separated on the orchestral tracks give a fresh dimension to old glories. Stereo enables the soloists to stand out in relief and, especially the reed players, to acquire a whole new resonance."
RONALD ATKINS - Guardian

"I beg you to forget your prejudices against 'stereo-enhanced mono' because what Robert Parker has achieved is light years ahead of anything which has been done before. Like all of us I disliked such enhancements, but having heard and analysed the first 22 programmes of the "Jazz Classics In Digital Stereo" series I am completely converted, and as far as I am concerned, Robert Parker has performed a near miracle."
ALAN TURNER - Jazz Journal International

"The 48 tracks provide a brilliant panorama of classic jazz. For a jazz lover listening to them consecutively is an experience comparable, perhaps, to viewing a series of newly restore Renaissance frescos in their original colours."
RICHARD GILBERT - The Listener

"It is not often that the critic can recommend something un-reservedly but Robert Parker's long heralded digital remastering of 50 and 60 year old 78's by the real giants of jazz in the classic period, prove to have been well worth waiting for." -
DAVID BADHAM - Jazz Journal International

****
THE ROBERT PARKER COLLECTION
****

Many of the jazz tracks featured on Mr Parker's broadcasts have been issued on LP and compact disc. At the time of writing, there are nine such LP's. In addition, there are five new releases in the series "The Golden Years In Digital Stereo" of which the Crosby record is one. It is hoped that this will also be released on CD in the new year.

JAZZ CLASSICS IN DIGITAL STEREO

Vol 1 - "NEW ORLEANS" - ABC L 38149 (Cassette C 38149)*
Vol 2 - "CHICAGO" - ABC L 38212 (Cassette C 38212)*
Vol 3 - "NEW YORK" - ABC L 38266 (Cassette C 38266)*
"LOUIS ARMSTRONG" - ABC L 38335 (Cassette C 38335)*
"FATS WALLER" - ABC L 38415 (Cassette C 38415)
"JELLY ROLL MORTON" - ABC L 38416 (Cassette C 38416)
"BIX BEIDERBECKE" - ABC L 38499 (Cassette 38499)#
"BESSIE SMITH" - ABC L 38500 (Cassette C 38500)
"JOHNNY DODDS" - ABC L 38556 (Cassette C 38556)

* Also available on compact disc
# Contains a couple of Bing tracks

THE GOLDEN YEARS IN DIGITAL STEREO

"BING CROSBY" - ABC L 38560 (Cassette C 38560)
"DANCE BANDS USA" - ABC L 38563 (Cassette C 38563)
"AL BOWLLY" - ABC L 38561 (Cassette C 38561)
"SILLY SONGS" - ABC L 38599 (Cassette C 38599)
"LOVE SONGS" - ABC L 38575 (Cassette C 38575)

I believe that some or all of the above are available in the U.K. However, if you want to order copies from Australia, why not drop a line to the Bentleigh Sewing And Record Centre, 348 Centre Road, Bentleigh, Victoria 3204. They should be able to supply any of the records that you require. Cost is Au$13 - $14 per LP or cassette, more of course, for compact discs.

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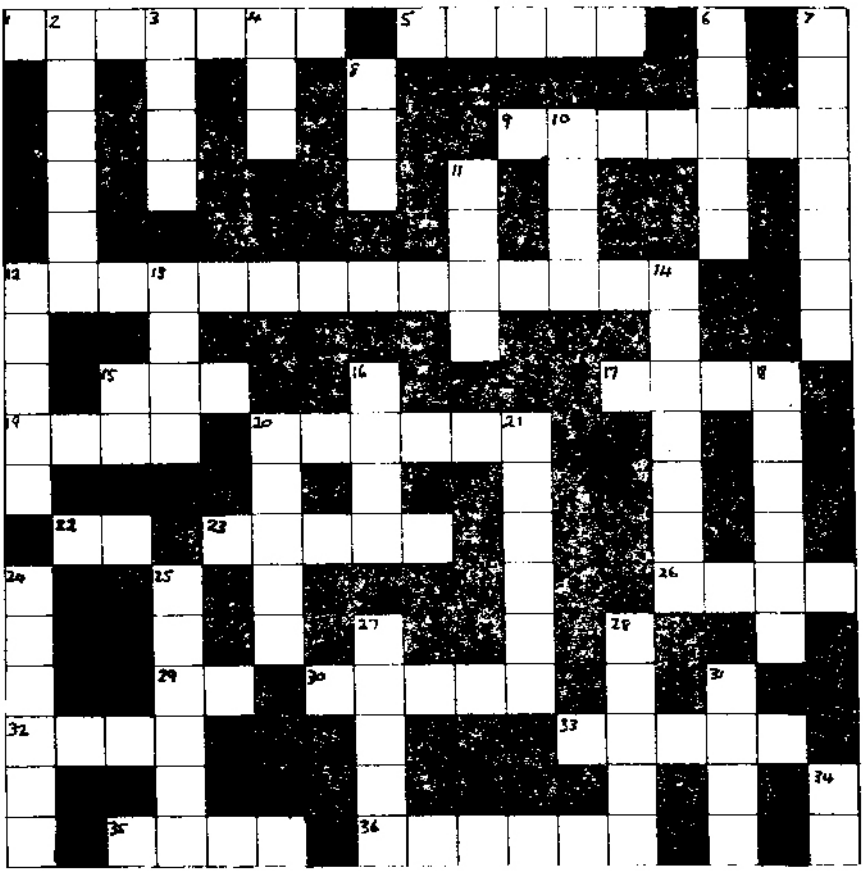
CROSS(BY) WORD No 1

****

Compiled by Diana McKie



ACROSS

1. Bing grew up in this town
5. What kind of Xmas did Bing dream of?
9. Bing's university.
12. The sequel to 'Going My Way'
15. Just ... of those things.
17. Co-star in Holiday Inn.
19,29,35. Bing's first film.
20. What was that name again?
22. Merry .. run around.
23. Comic, regular on K.M.H.
26. As well as being this, Bing liked to swing on one.
30. She sang 'True Love' to Bing.
32. Bing proved how good an ..... he was by winning an Oscar.
36. Bing's birthplace.

DOWN

2. This very polite-titled song big early hit for Bing.
3. Head of Decca when Bing joined the company.
4. Ingrid Bergman played one in the Bells of St Marys.
6. ..... Heart (mad?)
7. Father ..... was Bing's role on Going My Way.
8. Cornet player with the Paul Whiteman band.
10. When the moon comes .... Madison Square
11. Bing entertained the .... during World War 2.
12. Song writer Johnny .....
13. .... ago and far away.
14. Bing became ... . at King Arthur's Court.
15. Rhythm .. the river.
16. Bing often sings about this.
18. Race track owned by Bing.
20. Bing's fans have a real ..... on him.
21. A Connecticut ..... in King Arthur's Court.
24. ..... Bay
25. One of the Road movies.
27. ..... Music Hall
28. Recorded most songs on this label.
31. Bing's favourite sport.
34. Initials of baseball team owned by Bing.

****

(Keith Parkinson submitted the following which appeared in PUNCH. I reckon he's having a go at our accent! This means WAR!)

INTERNATIONAL SECTION

A migrant woman thought she had been sent home "to die" when the hospital told her to go home "today". A Migrant Resource Centre spokeswoman said the misunderstanding underlined the need for improved interpreting services in Queensland hospitals.

S. Fraser (*The Herald*, Melbourne)

****
TWO MORE JOHN JOYCE TAPES
****

I'm delighted to be able to report that the highly productive John Joyce has sent us two more tapes in his excellent collection. This brings to a total of twelve the number of tapes that John has provided for the club featuring radio and TV material.

Ask for JJ 11 and JJ 12 when ordering.

.....

MORE NEW RELEASES

THE TWO BING COMPACT DISCS ARE OUT IN THE USA!

Richard Pearson reports seeing the two Crosby Compact Discs that we reported were coming earlier this year. No other details as yet.

THE CLASSIC MOVIE MUSICALS OF JAMES VAN HEUSEN (USA)

Sorry that we don't have the catalogue or label details on this one but it is a double LP set featuring some of the best-known compositions of Jiimy Van Huesen from movies between 1940 and 1968. The Crosby tracks featured are: It's always you, You lucky people you, Constantly, Road to Morocco, Moonlight beciomes you, Sunday Monday or always, Swinging on a star, Aren't you glad you're you, It's anybody's spring, Put it there pal, Welcome to my dreams, Harmony, My heart is a hobo, But beautiful, You don't have to know the language, Once & For always, You're in love with someone, Someplace on anywhere Road, Accidents will happen, The magic window and Merry go run around.

Some of the above may be from soundtracks or radio. For example, 'Harmony' feature Bing, Bob Hope & Gary so it must be from a broadcast.

Other artists on the set include Mary Martin, Betty Hutton, Dorothy Lamour, Frank Sinatra and Julie Andrews.

One other clue to the label - the notes I have say 'A Box Office Production'.

THE B.C.H.S. REPORT

FROM KEN TWISS

Vern soon, BCHS hopes to, at last, move into its new location, just five blocks up the hill. This will be no small task. A lot of material has been acquired since we moved into the Perkins building. All is packed and ready. I estimate it will take two 22 foot van loads to do the job.

.....

To date, Bing's birthplace has not been put on the market. At least we have not been notified. It should be announced soon, but it will take a miracle if we are to purchase it. To date, BCHS has about $8000 in the birthplace fund.

.....

I believe that all BCHS members should be appriased of the following and have the facts instead of rumours. On May 19th, we received a letter from Mr Roy Farrow of Wilson, Sonsini, Goodrich & Rosati, stating that "It has come to our attention that you are not only utilizing the name and likeness of Bing Crosby for your own purposes, but have provided the logo to others. This not only violates the legal rights of the Crosby family vested in HLC Properties Ltd., but may result in an embarrassing situation for all. We ask you to refrain from any further use of the logo shown and any other utilization of Bing's name or likeness without prior authorization of HLC Properites Ltd."

I answered Mr Marrow asking for an explanation and on June 14th, his reply stated: "I would suggest that we enter into an agreement". Two copies of a licensing agreement were enclosed. This 5 page document could allow HLC Properties to prevent BCHS from doing anything that does not fit their "High Standards of quality".

I called an emergency BCHS board meeting and the consensus of the board was to do nothing until an attorney could be consulted.

Memebr Roy Starks and I consulted former governor John D. Spellman. As an attorney, his advice was to forward any further communication from Mr Farrow direct to him. And there the matter rests.

(Reprinted from "The Crooner", magazine of the B.C.H.S.)

COLLECTORS' CORNER

These two labels were supplied by Ashley Cooper, 3 Mount View Road, Glenorchy Tasmania 7010, who writes:

"As you can see, I have placed stickers with the song titles on the appropriate sides. Apparently, the disc was wrongly labeled by the record company.
It was given to me by a radio announcer in Hobart many years ago when the record was first released.
I was wondering whether you know of any other copies of this record around with this particular label on, or is it a rare item?"

Well Ashley, this is the first time that I've seen this particular mis-labelled disc, although I understand that this is not the first time it has happened.
Would any of our readers like to put together an article on "Bing's Wrong Labels"? I'm sure it would make interesting reading for these pages. BM

BING'S COMMERCIALLY ISSUED OPEN REEL AUDIO TAPES

Last issue in 'Collectors Corner', we featured one of Bing's commercial open reel audio tapes and requested information regarding further titles issued in this way. UK member Colin Pugh has responded with the following titles. Note: The catalogue numbers in brackets are the disc equivalent.

* AROUND THE WORLD IN DIXIELAND
World Record Club (Capitol) (UK) TT652
Mono, 2-track, 3 3/4 ips, 5" spool (T-2300)

* BING AND SATCHMO
MGM (US manufacture - probably UK issue) STC 3882
Stereo, 4-track. 7½ ips, 7" spool. (CS-6020)

* BING SINGS WHILST BREGMAN SWINGS
HMV (UK) HTD 817, mono, 2-track.
7½ ips, 5 3/4" spool. (CLP 1088)

* GREAT COUNTRY HITS
World Record Club (probably UK) TT 833
Mono, 2-track. 3 3/4 ips, 5" spool. (T2346)

* GREAT COUNTRY HITS
Capitol (UK) TA-T
Mono, 2-track. 3 3/4 ips, 4" spool. (T 2346)

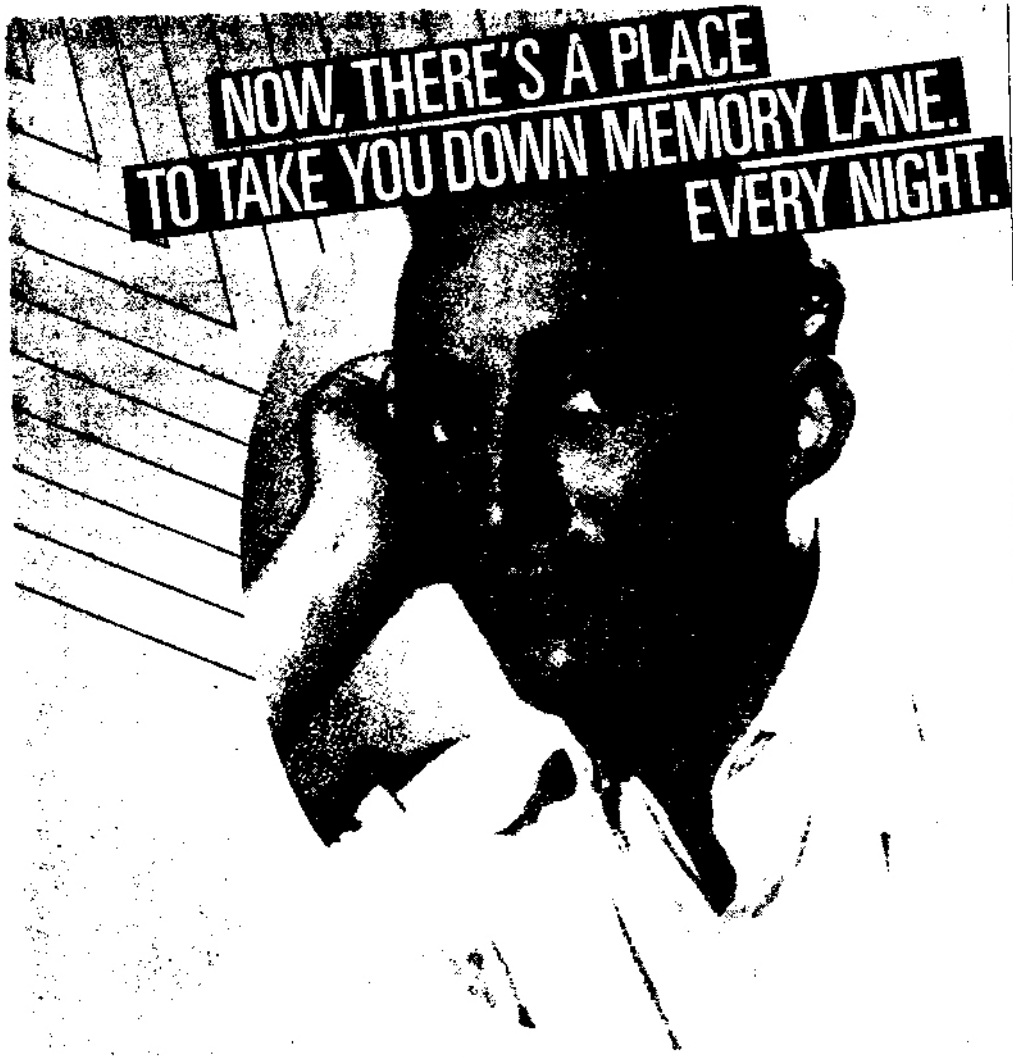
* HIGH SOCIETY
Capitol (UK) TA-W 750
Mono, 2-track, 3 3/4 ips, 5" spool. (LCT 6166)

* KEEP CHRISTMAS BRIGHT
Capitol (Creative Products) (US) 62420
Stereo, 4-track. 7½ ips, 7" spool.

* MERRY CHRISTMAS
Decca (US) ST74-8128.
Stereo, 4-track. 7½ ips, 7" spool.

* THAT TRAVELLING TWO BEAT
World Record Club (Capitol) (UK) TT 652
Mono, 2-track. 3 3/4 ips, 5" spool (T2300).

Now, who can add further to this list?



Announcing the opening of Club 5, Singapore's newest nightspot for mingling, drinking and dancing to the music of yesteryear. A Music & Dance Lounge that's a blend of the popular dance halls of the 1950's and cocktail lounges of the 1980's. The first of its kind in Singapore.

Prayers to Bing Crosby make blind man see

A BLIND man whose entire life revolves around the music of crooner Bing Crosby has been miraculously cured—thanks, he says, to the late velvet-voiced singer.

Although his doctor laughs at the notion Bing Crosby cured his patient, Dr. Alistair Scott admits he has no explanation for the sudden and complete healing of his former patient, Reginald K. Witherspoon.

"Mr. Witherspoon has regained his eyesight at the age of 80," Scott confirms, "and we're still investigating his unusual case. I really can't say how or why this happened, especially so late in life."

Greatest

But Witherspoon and his family in Dublin, Ireland insist they know the reason for this medical miracle.

"My father is the greatest fan Bing Crosby ever had," his daughter, Moira Lee McKenna, 52, notes.

"To this day he listens to his records on our old record player. He has quite a collection, and many people have offered him a lot of money for these classic recordings.

"But my dad would never sell one of them. In fact, in his will, he stipulates that those of us who inherit them not sell them either. We must pass them on through the family," the mother of five adds.

Witherspoon was an apprentice electrician when, at the age of 22, he was seriously shocked and burned while working on some industrial wiring.

Immediately after the tragic accident, his sight began to fade and within a year he was totally blind.

"I was bedridden for almost that whole year," Witherspoon recalls, "and my only comforts were my family and my records."

As years went by, Witherspoon narrowed his interest in music to the songs of Bing Crosby. Finally fed up with listening to nothing else in the home, his son Brian joked a year after the crooner's death in 1977: "If you love him so much and think he's such a saint, why don't you pray to him?"

His father thought that was a fabulous idea.

He even set up a little shrine in the parlor above the record player, with old pictures of Bing and ragged newspaper clippings on his doings.

Incredibly, within two years, Witherspoon's vision improved to the point where he could distinguish light, then continued to improve to so he could see his grandchildren and four youngest children for the first time.

"I'm still legally blind," he adds, "but I believe my vision is improving year by year. I've contacted the Vatican to see about canonizing Bing Crosby. I know he healed me."

Dr. Scott notes: "It could be the electrical shock he received years ago caused something to press on his optic nerve, and maybe now with age that obstruction is slowly dissolving. We're still studying his unusual case."

There are TWO BING CROSBYS

SOME little time ago we ran an article which criticised the famous crooner. As a reply here is an intimate pen picture of the star by a Hollywood writer who knows him well. You will get to know him better by reading this informative article.

by Sada COWAN

IF there was one thing I disliked more than another it was the tales told around Hollywood about Bing Crosby and his fans. Women who fling jewellery and bouquets over the footlights have always left me cold. In this same class I felt were women who were ga-ga over Bing.

Now mind you, I had nothing against Bing personally. He is probably a grand fellow. And I thought he was entitled to all the fans he could get, including Sally Rand's, if she'd give it to him.

But it was the silly unbalanced things that a lot of those fans did which turned me unjustly I'll admit - against the Crooner and kept me from ever wishing to meet him. One of these silly things was done by a school girl in the Middle West.

If there is a flood in China and thousands are rendered homeless we say "How unfortunate," and forget it. If there is famine in India and millions starve we pity the sufferers and eat our breakfast without another thought.

But if a child we know, just one child, not thousands, happens to be caught in the rip-tide and drown swimming, we are filled with sympathy and we do anything we can for the bereaved parents. It's natural. Anything happening far away and happening *en masse* doesn't grip our imagination the way a thing does if it happens uniquely and near home. And it was the ONE incident of the Middle-West school girl which aroused me.

Before this event I frankly wasn't interested. Bing could "Boo.. boo.." as much as he pleased and women could faint on his doorstep if they liked. But when this daughter of a friend of mine got a crush—got it so badly she couldn't eat, sleep or think, refused to continue her schooling and even attempted suicide, I knew something had to be done to help her and I determined to meet the object of her adoration.

Requesting an interview I was taken to his set where the company were working on *Two for To-night*. Bing was making this with the lovely Joan Bennett—a romantic enough combination to please even the most exacting.

But to-day Joan was not on the set. Instead, Bing and a buddy were playing some kind of a comedy scene where they were busily squirting each other with soda from a syphon bottle. All at once, as the scene finished, who should come out on the set but Jackie Oakie, all done up in a Sou'wester, high hip rubber boots and goggles. He had been tipped off that Bing was laying for him, to bombast him with a barrage of seltzer water.

"Fine," said Jackie, "Squirt away!"

They knew no soaking would penetrate that outfit. So instead of wasting seltzer, Bing and Director Frank Tuttle caught the squirming Jackie, carried him to a tank of water and gave him a hearty ducking.

Bing roared! Just a big kid!

A few moments later I met him.

Now, I suppose you expect me to say that all my previous ideas about him vanished and that I fell an immediate victim to his charms. But you're wrong. I didn't. I even wondered what made women so ga-ga. He's such a frank chap, such a nice clean lad, so down to earth and simple.

I could easily believe the story they tell about his latest preview, where all the stars turned out in full regalia, but Bing put in an appearance in a faded yellow sweater and badly fitting clothes.

You can imagine all the world liking him, but he's the last person you'd ever associate with moonlight and roses until you hear him sing.

Then . . . !

I realised that there are two Bing Crosbys. One the real Bing: a straightforward typical American fellow, as ready to fight as to sing. The other—that illusion born in the minds of women whenever and wherever his golden voice reaches them.

Women listen and build their own impression of him. As in the olden days of silent pictures, when people imagined the dialogue—and each hero spoke as the onlooker's heart dictated.

There is a quality in Bing's voice—a springtime glamorous quality which awakens in older women the dream that once filled their soul, and sets the brains of young girls throbbing with visions of the what-is-to-be.

Psychologists would say that "the listener suffers a transference." In other words, the vague impersonal image created by the sound of Bing's voice, becomes confused with Bing's personality as imagined by his hearers and so the illusion is created that each woman adores Bing as her own special lover.

His most successful song in five years, one which topped all his others, is "Love in Bloom." Sophisticated people like the melody. The others like the words. (And do they DRIP!) The magnetism of Bing's voice moves all who hear him. Even in the studio where he works, and where the secretaries and other girls are supposed to have grown callous to the charms of the stars, there is always an outburst of "Oh . . . ! and Ah!" when Bing is recording. Much the same effect as that moment after a skyrocket has burst into endless coloured points of light. You know what I mean.

In his office he is liked for an entirely different reason. Exceedingly business-like with the

Bing Crosby with Eleanor Whitney and Martita Hunt—not forgetting his race horse which is one of his pet hobbies. Below, Mr. and Mrs. Crosby with two of their children, Phillip and Dennis.

female employees, even formal, they know that he is a man to be respected as well as admired and that nothing is farther from his mind than flirtation.

Strange as it may seem, Bing is really a man's man rather than a woman's.

When I tried to talk with him about the matter uppermost in my mind, he laughed. It was ridiculous! Fan mail was delightful to get. It meant people liked his voice, but . . . Pshaw! Nobody really took him seriously. There wasn't a thing romantic about him. Suddenly his mood changed. Laughter was replaced by dead seriousness.

"I'm getting tired of all this talk," he said. "Singing is my business. I try to put it over. But you writers all imagine that women . . ."

He was on the point of becoming angry. When to my great relief he was called back to the set. He went, telling me he would return. I decided not to be there when he came back. Yet I was still determined to know more about this fellow Bing.

Standing near the camera I spied an old friend, Hezzi Tate, who had been for many years an assistant director at Paramount. We had worked together in the silent picture days when I was a writer for Cecil de Mille. Knowing Hezzi for a frank outspoken chap I decided to ask him to tell me what he knew about Bing.

"He's one of the ideal guys in the business. Shoots straight from the shoulder. Remember Wallie Reid? Bing has some of the same qualities that made everyone so crazy over Wallie—the kind of man every woman would like her son to be, and every girl—her husband." He paused an instant then continued, "No one on the lot better liked than Bing. Men don't think of him as a crooner. Just as a regular fellow. Everyone who works for him would fight for him at the drop of a hat."

"No swell head?"

"The word's not in his dictionary. With all

his dough—he makes about $2,500 a week, counting records and broadcasts—he's always got a kind word and a helping hand for everybody."

"This is all very fine. But it's women's reactions I'm interested in."

"He never looks at a woman. He's got one he loves and that's all he wants. In the many years I've knocked around this lot—and I've heard fellows talk plenty—I've never heard one word against Bing. Never heard his name coupled with anybody's. And he never allows a suggestive thing in his pictures.

"I've got a twelve year old kid who's crazy about Bing. Can't tune in fast enough to get him on the radio. And when a twelve year old child is crazy about a man who is supposed to spell nothing but romance, it's a pretty good sign that there is something fine and clean about him."

"This is all very splendid and may nominate him for the Hall of Fame, but it doesn't help me much with my Middle Western School Girl problem." Then I told him the story. "I want him to write to her," I concluded, "and try to knock this nonsense from her head.

"He won't. He won't take it seriously enough. You'd better go and talk to his brother Larry. He'll help you."

So to Larry I went.

As I entered, this very nice older brother who acts as Bing's manager and advisor was busily cutting stamps off envelopes and pasting them on a cardboard so that the stamps formed a huge map.

"Stamps from all over the world," he explained. "Off Bing's fan mail. At the present time the greater part comes from the British possessions, New Zealand, Australia, etc."

"All ga-ga I suppose," I sniffed, somewhat contemptuously.

"Oh, no. Some of them are squawks that they don't like his stories. People don't like Bing in anything sophisticated. They want simple boy and girl romance—nothing more."

He picked up a letter from his desk, written in an angular spinster handwriting.

"Here's a funny one! A cheque—which of course we're sending back. She had a guilty conscience because at a recent preview she snipped a piece out of his jacket for a souvenir."

"Probably that's why he goes about in old clothes."

"He likes old clothes."

"How did his marriage affect his fan mail?"

"Doubled it. The twins trebled it. His wife gets as much kick out of the letters as he does. They both love to read them."

"But this is once I want him to write one," I began, and told my story.

"Sure, we'll write to her. We'll paint Bing black as a smoke kettle." He laughed. "Want to dictate it?"

"No."

"All right. Here goes." He reached for a pencil and hurriedly scribbled a few words, "My dear young lady," he read aloud as he wrote, "It is with great sorrow that I, Bing's brother, hear that your weight is dropping off (Bing likes 'em plump). Also that you are losing sleep over Bing. He's not worth it. Believe me, I'm his brother and I know . . ." "How's that?"

"Well, something like that. I'll leave it to you. Here's the name and address."

With a sense of relief, and a burden dropped from my heart I left the office, feeling sure that the type of letter the wise Mr. Larry would write would crush out any dream the romantic young lady might have.

But who can count upon a girl's reactions? Especially a girl in love with her dream.

The letter, sent with the best of intentions, only succeeded in bringing the aforesaid young lady to the scene of action, bag and baggage, determined to see for herself.

One night the girl literally camped on Bing's doorstep, demanding admittance to his home.

The servants naturally refused. She insisted. They asked her to go away, ordered her to go, and finally said that if she didn't move fast they would call the police.

About this time Mrs. Bing Crosby arrived upon the scene, asked the cause of the disturbance, and was told.

Fortunately she knew all about the school girl's romance and the letter Larry had written. And being a woman, with a woman's heart and understanding, she had considered the episode as of importance, nor had she dismissed it without a thought, as Bing did. She was sorry for this girl. And she truly wanted to help her.

So she did a brilliant thing. She invited her in. She made the girl feel so at home, she overwhelmed her so with courtesy and friendliness, that the one-track-adoration expanded and admitted Bing's wife into her admiration.

Mrs. Crosby invited her guest to stay to dinner.

When Bing came home she introduced them and even managed to leave them alone with each other.

She showed her the house. Showed her Bing's horses and then invited her up to the nursery to help put the babies to bed.

The girl wasn't such a fool as she had appeared.

Little by little the thought began to permeate that Bing had a beautiful wife, lovely children, a charming home—to all of which he was utterly devoted.

As the evening wore on, she saw the other Bing—the real Bing—a far finer fellow than any creature of her distorted fancy. She saw him as father, husband and gracious host, and she realised what had happened.

It was his voice with which she had fallen in love

She knew that now and told them both so begging him to sing for her once more.

He did.

For her it was like bidding her lover farewell for ever.

When it came time for her to go home, Dixie Crosby sent her in Bing's car, knowing that this would be just an added thrill for the girl.

"I can't tell you how much to-night has meant to me. And I'll never dream of the real Bing again," she confided softly to Dixie, as she said good-night. "He belongs to you. But when I hear his voice over the radio, he'll be mine again. And you won't mind that, will you?"

LETTER BOX

From Richard Pearson, Arlington

I saw Bing's brother a few weeks ago at the Springfield Shopping Mall. They've been having a series of free-concerts by big bands every Sunday and Bob's Bobcats were there of course. They played excellently and Bob looked good and even sang one number. He didn't sound too bad either! I saw Bing on Broadway back in 1976 and then I saw Bob almost ten years later. Believe it or not, I remember seeing Bob do a daily talk show on TV about 30 years ago. I was very young at the time but the amount of TV exposure that Bob must have had made a real impression. Indeed I didn't really find out about Bing until a few years later! We wanted to talk to Bob for a few minutes but there were too many other people crowded around the bandstand. We did manage to get his autograph though.

From Karl Dobbie, Queensland

In reply to Clyde Wilson's query as to whether Harry Barris was in 'Anchors Aweigh', it would appear not. This was a 1945 MGM movie and in the 1946 Yearbook of Motion Pictures, Harry Barris is given credits only for 'Penhouse Rhythm' (Universal) and 'Steppin' in Society' (Republic) for 1945.

From Frans van der Kolff, Amsterdam

The article and interview with Harry Tobias in the last issue were very good. Articles on the composers and writers of songs associated with Bing make very interesting reading.

From Keith Parkinson, St Helens

Yesterday (Sept 28th), the annual meeting of the International Crosby Crcle took place at Leeds. Mike Crampton kept the meeting moving along from 3.00pm until 10.30 pm but Reg Bristo was absent from the secretary's chair this year due to health problems. We had a guest from the USA to provide a truly international flavour and a few first-timers confirmed that new blood was still joining the ranks of Bing admirers. The ongoing highlight of the meeting was a video programme presented on a large video screen comprising some 52 different musical items from Bing's films. Next year's meeting is timed for Oct 4th and if any Australian enthusiasts are in the U.K. then, we will be pleased to play host.

TRADING POST

FRANK WALSH, 1/1 Peacock Place, Burleigh Waters, Gold Coast, QLD 4220

requires VHS dubs of the following Crosby movies:

Here is my Heart
Anything Goes (1936)
Pennies From Heaven
The Star Maker
Top O' The Morning
Man On Fire
Say One For Me

Frank would like any of his films to be minus commmercials and is welcome to trade if necessary.

JOHN WALL, 4 Hustler Court, Mount Waverley, Vic 3149 (Ph: 277 8568)

is prepared to pay a good price, or swap for, the following LP's:

Accentuate the Positive
Cool Of the Evening
Only Forever
Holiday Inn

All, of course, are from the Decca/Festival series 'Bing's Hollywood'.

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From Tracey Lee, Glebe

I spenta very nice evening in Hollywood recently with my very good friend Dorothy Lamour and Philip Crosby. He spoke so well of his dad. I'll do a short newsletter article for the Crosby Voice on his reminiscences.

From Stan Leland, New York

I recently attended a 'paper collectibles' show where I picked up some wonderful 1935 and 1948 articles with pictures of Bing from the 'movie' magazines of the time. I also bought some glossy movie stills of Bing from various scenes on and off the movie set from the thirties. They also had a lot of original movie posters of Bing's movies from the 30's and 40's.

FROM OUT OF THE PAST

COCKTAILS FOR TWO

It was now early 1931, and I was back at the studio again. I was delighted to find that a good friend of mine had been brought out from New York by Paramount to join the music staff. It was a pleasure to greet Arthur Johnston, who had just left Irving Berlin after many years as Irving's personal arranger, pianist, and all-around music assistant.

I asked Nat Finston if I could have Arthur exclusively assigned to me and to the musicals I was working on. To my surprise, the request was granted. It was a great break for me, and made my work a good deal easier. I recalled that Irving Berlin, for all his miraculous composing talent, was a one-finger composer. Arthur, the man he hummed his tunes to, did all the rest. He would fill in the rich, gorgeous harmonies, put the piano arrangement on paper, demonstrate the songs whenever necessary, and teach them to the artists in Berlin's shows.

Although I play with all ten fingers, I used to secretly envy the help Berlin received from Arthur. I often wished I could afford someone like him. And here he was—Arthur handling all the musical details for me, with *Paramount* footing the bill!

I was on a couple of unexciting assignments at the time—something called *Dance Palace*, and a couple of songs for young Jackie Cooper in his first starring vehicle, *Skippy*. Neither script looked like there would be a spot for the kind of song hit I wanted to sink my teeth into. Mostly situation numbers and special material, that sort of thing. Actually, I always found it fun writing such material. But after my long absence from the studio, I felt that what I needed most was a smash hit.

I was lunching in the studio commissary with Arthur one day. "Besides all these movie tunes, do you ever squeeze in just a plain, ordinary pop song? Something that's not in a picture?" he asked.

"Well, frankly, I hadn't thought about it lately. There's always so much to do around here. Why do you ask?"

"No special reason," Arthur replied, almost apologetically, "except that I thought of a hell of a song title last night."

Arthur was a bit cagey, and refused to disclose the title until we could get to the piano in my office. I knew that he wanted very badly to write songs in addition to his arranging and coaching chores, and I saw no reason why I shouldn't encourage him.

Back at my office, he blurted out the title—"Just One More Chance." I liked the sound of it instantly. He also had a musical phrase to fit the title, just the first four notes. He didn't seem to know where to go from there, and the next phrase popped into my brain like a flash. I hummed it to him, and he tried it on the piano. With only the first eight bars of the chorus, I instinctively knew we had a winner.

"I could finish this with you like rolling off a log," I said. "But what do we do with a song and no picture—just hold it and put it in the trunk? The radio bands aren't playing *anything* these days except movie songs."

But Arthur, way ahead of me, had an answer to that one. "What do you think of Bing Crosby?" he queried.

"I know him pretty well. Bing will go places."

"So what's wrong with getting a hit Crosby record instead of a movie? This number sounds like it was made to order for him."

I saw the point. Since I had last seen Bing, he and the other two Rhythm Boys had left the Whiteman band and were now with Gus Arnheim's Orchestra at the Cocoanut Grove. It was an open secret that the Grove was jammed every night, chiefly because Bing's solos with the band had caught on with the movie crowd. Arnheim was featuring him on the nightly Grove broadcasts over the NBC Pacific Coast network. And, for a clincher, Brunswick had just signed Bing to do his first solo recordings.

We finished "Just One More Chance" before the afternoon was over, tailoring the song especially for Crosby's croony ballad style. The finished product sounded very satisfying, even exciting. We felt we had come up with some kind of a hit. To make

sure we weren't kidding ourselves, we called in Eddie Janis, Famous Music's West Coast manager, who had an office at the studio. Eddie listened as I sang and Arthur played. Soon he was practically drooling. "How fast can I get it?" was his excited response.

We got a similar reaction when we played it for Bing. Arthur rehearsed him on it, and Bing introduced it a few nights later on Arnheim's 10-to-12 radio broadcast. We were at the Grove ourselves to hear the song's debut that night, and heard the crowd of Hollywoodites on the dance floor demanding encore after encore. Bing had stopped the show with the new song.

Night after night on the Grove broadcasts, "Chance" was Bing's feature solo. To say the results were startling would be an understatement. Calls at the music stores were coming in so fast that Famous Music dug up a Los Angeles printer who almost broke his printing press rushing out copies overnight. Jack Kapp, who headed Brunswick Records, flew out to the company's Hollywood plant and made his employees work around the clock preparing a Crosby recording session in a big hurry.

Precisely two weeks after the premiere broadcast, "Chance" was the number-one song on the West Coast. Famous Music then went all out on a promotion campaign, and within a month it was the top seller nationally. Never before, and never since, has a song of mine been established as a smash hit so quickly.

Jack Kapp must have used sleight of hand or something, because records were in the shops a week or so after the sheet music. "Just One More Chance"—Brunswick catalog number 6120—was the second of the historic Crosby Brunswicks, the series which is today among the most coveted of all items by record collectors. Almost all of Bing's previous records had been as a band vocalist, with Whiteman or Arnheim getting top billing. Now Bing got solo billing, and his "Chance" record took off just as the sheet music had done.

Among the celebrities in the crowd at the Grove the night of the first broadcast was producer-director Mack Sennett, who loved Bing's voice. Mack asked Bing to stop at his table for a drink, and offered him the princely sum of $750 to play the lead in a one-reel musical short to be titled *Just One More Chance.* It would feature the song, one of a series of song-title shorts. To Bing, who had just married Fox starlet Dixie Lee, $750 for a few days' work seemed like a fortune. He accepted Sennett's offer eagerly.

Looking back at it all, it is striking how a single song, as it soared to the top of the charts, also helped to send soaring the careers of Bing Crosby and Jack Kapp, Jack's struggling Brunswick firm, and the infant Famous Music Company. It also launched a new series for Mack Sennett, who was working hard to make a comeback. And, of course, it enhanced the stature of Arthur Johnston and myself as songwriters.

Shortly afterward the three Rhythm Boys, in a dispute over money with the Grove management, walked out on their contract. They had doubled and tripled the Grove's nightly business, even with the country in the throes of a depression, and they felt they deserved a raise. But the hotel management, very shortsightedly, insisted that Bing, Al, and Harry live up to their original contract. In walking out, the boys found themselves in big trouble with the musicians' union, who blacklisted them locally. This was the end of the Rhythm Boys as a combo.

Being shut out of West Coast engagements, Bing, with his brother Everett and their wives, decided to give New York a try.

Everett quit his job as a truck salesman, convinced that he could fare better as Bing's manager, on a commission of ten percent of Bing's earnings. Everett felt that he could get Bing a solo radio network deal on the strength of Bing's West Coast radio popularity and the success of his first Brunswick recordings. Bing himself was not so sure, but realized he had no choice except to give it a try. By mail, Everett got a promise from CBS to give Bing an audition—if it was held in New York.

A week later, the New York audition took place. Bing dug up his old pal, guitarist Eddie Lang, to accompany him. Bing was apprehensive, but Eddie, the greatest jazz guitarist around despite being unable to read a note of music, gave him the self-assurance he needed.

There was an amazing coincidence connected with the audition that Bing didn't know about at the time. A week before, CBS president William Paley had been on shipboard, on his way home from Europe. Next to his deck chair, a small boy with a record player kept playing the one record he owned, over and over. The record was Crosby's "Just One More Chance." Paley asked the kid to show him the platter, and he jotted down the name of the singer. He would have the talent department of CBS look him up one of these days. It was a different kind of sound, and it got under Paley's skin.

Back in New York, Paley listened to an aircheck recording of Bing's audition. "That's the guy I was going to have you find for me," he fairly screamed. "He can stand a big CBS buildup. Sign him!"

Everett was sent for, and Bing was signed to a CBS contract at $600 a week, with more to come if they were able to land a sponsor.

A huge publicity buildup was launched, and a premiere date announced for a nightly series of fifteen-minute programs at prime time, 7 o'clock in the evening, on the coast-to-coast CBS network. No one before had ever received such a royal opportunity on radio. And yet, believe it or not, Bing blew it. So fraught with anxiety was he on the announced premiere date that he rehearsed all afternoon, singing for four solid hours. By 6 p.m. he had lost his voice. He was barely able to manage a croaking whisper. A throat specialist, hastily called in, diagnosed it as a severe case of laryngitis and sent Bing home to bed. At 7 o'clock a whole nation of curious radio listeners who had followed the publicity campaign tuned in, only to hear an announcer regretfully say that the Crosby debut had to be postponed.

It happened again, on two subsequent premieres. Bing had still not recovered his voice, and was beginning to wonder if it would ever return. Each time, the same announcement came over the airwaves: "The Bing Crosby program is postponed. Consult your local newspaper for the new opening date."

Finally, on the fourth try, Bing made it. Still shaky and not completely recovered, he held on to Eddie Lang for dear life, facing the microphone and backed by Freddie Rich's allstar CBS house orchestra. His brow shining with beads of perspiration, Bing felt his voice crack on one or two notes as he began humming a few bars of his new signature theme, "Where the Blue of the Night." The opening song on this history-making Crosby network debut was "Just One More Chance." By the time Bing was past the second bar, he knew his vocal chords were back on the track. This was confirmed by a smile and a wink from Eddie Lang as Bing, now brimming with confidence, let out full blast.

Two or three radio columnists printed some snide cracks about how fitting it was for Crosby to plead for "Just One More Chance" in his opening song after all those postponements. But the show was nevertheless an immediate success. Hundreds of

telegrams poured in from all over the country during the first week. The "sustaining" program—which in radio parlance means sponsorless—was broadcast for only a brief time before a national sponsor, Cremo Cigars, bought the show for the entire season. The show, still done nightly, was lengthened from fifteen minutes to a half hour, and by midseason Crosby had developed such a national following that he threatened to usurp the throne of the current radio superstar, Rudy Vallee.

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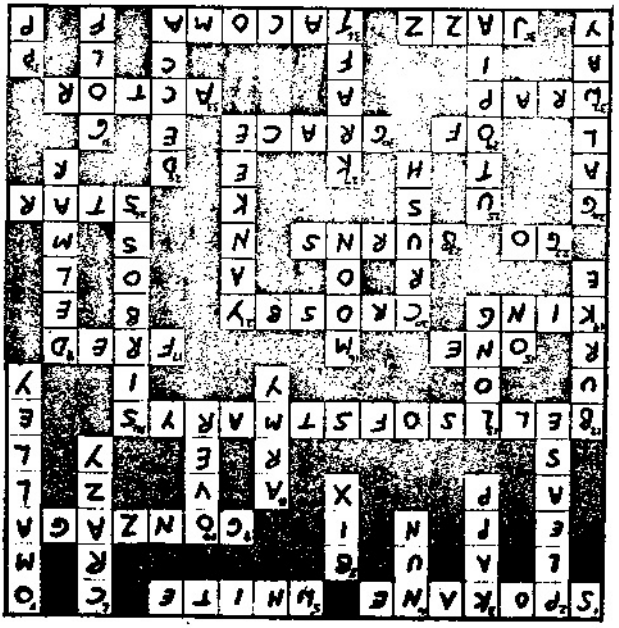
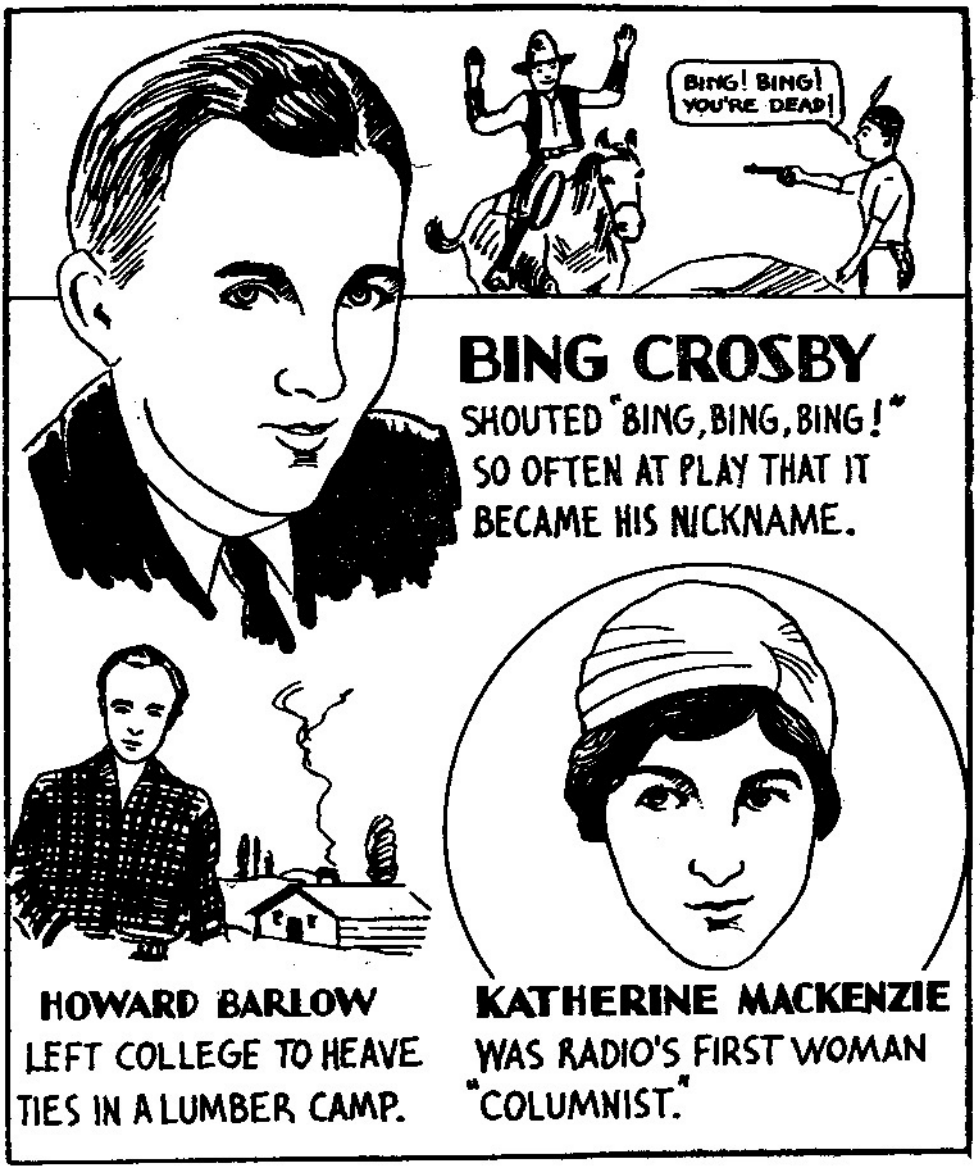


And that's it for this issue of the Crosby Voice. Have a very happy Christmas and may 1987 be your best year yet. Until then, good luck to you.

Bob Mallen


BING! BING! YOU'RE DEAD!
BING CROSBY
SHOUTED "BING, BING, BING!" SO OFTEN AT PLAY THAT IT BECAME HIS NICKNAME.
HOWARD BARLOW
LEFT COLLEGE TO HEAVE TIES IN A LUMBER CAMP.
KATHERINE MACKENZIE
WAS RADIO'S FIRST WOMAN "COLUMNIST."